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THE
PLEASURES
OF
IMAGINATION.
A
POEM.
THE EIGHTH EDITION.



THE
PLEASURES
OF
IMAGINATION.

A
POEM.

IN THREE BOOKS.

By Dr. AKENSIDE.



L O N D O N:
Printed for J. DODSLEY in Pall-mall.
MDCCCLXIX.



The first of these is the fact that the
the origin of the word "British" is not
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...



THE DESIGN.

THERE are certain powers in human nature which seem to hold a middle place between the organs of bodily sense and the faculties of moral perception: They have been called by a very general name, **THE POWERS OF IMAGINATION**. Like the external senses, they relate to matter and motion; and, at the same time, give the mind ideas analogous to those of moral approbation and dislike. As they are the inlets of some of the most exquisite pleasures with which we are acquainted, it has naturally happened that men of warm and sensible tempers have sought means to recall the delightful

perceptions which they afford, independent of the objects which originally produc'd them. This gave rise to the imitative or designing arts; some of which, as painting and sculpture, directly copy the external appearances which were admir'd in nature; others, as music and poetry, bring them back to remembrance by signs universally establish'd and understood.

But these arts, as they grew more correct and deliberate, were of course led to extend their imitation beyond the peculiar objects of the imaginative powers; especially poetry, which making use of language as the instrument by which it imitates, is consequently become an unlimited representative of every species and mode of being. Yet as their primary intention was only to express the objects of imagination, and as they still abound chiefly in ideas of that class, they of course retain their original

ginal character, and all the different pleasures which they excite, are term'd, in general, PLEASURES OF IMAGINATION.

The design of the following poem is to give a view of *these* in the largest acceptation of the term ; *so that whatever our imagination feels from the agreeable appearances of nature, and all the various entertainment we meet with either in poetry, painting, music, or any of the elegant arts, might be deducible from one or other of those principles in the constitution of the human mind, which are here establish'd and explain'd.*

In executing this general plan, it was necessary first of all to distinguish the Imagination from our other faculties ; and in the next place to characterize those original forms or properties of being about which it is conversant, and which are by nature

adapted to it, as light is to the eyes, or truth to the understanding. These properties Mr. *Addison* had reduced to the three general classes of greatness, novelty, and beauty; and into these we may analyse every object, however complex, which, properly speaking, is delightful to the imagination. But such an object may also include many other sources of pleasure; and its beauty, or novelty, or grandeur, will make a stronger impression by reason of this concurrence. Besides which, the imitative arts, especially poetry, owe much of their effect to a *similar* exhibition of properties quite *foreign* to the imagination, insomuch that in every line of the most applauded poems, we meet with either ideas drawn from the external senses, or truths discover'd to the understanding, or illustrations of contrivance and final causes, or, above all the rest, with circumstances proper to awaken and engage the passions. It was therefore necessary to enumerate and
exemplify

exemplify these different species of pleasure; especially that from the passions, which, as it is supreme in the noblest work of human genius, so being in some particulars not a little surprizing, gave an opportunity to enliven the didactic turn of the poem, by introducing an allegory to account for the appearance.

After these parts of the subject which hold chiefly of admiration, or naturally warm and interest the mind, a pleasure of a very different nature, that which arises from ridicule, came next to be consider'd. As this is the foundation of the comic manner in all the arts, and has been but very imperfectly treated by moral writers, it was thought proper to give it a particular illustration, and to distinguish the general sources from which the ridicule of characters is deriv'd. Here too a change of stile became necessary; such a one as might yet be
consistent,

consistent, if possible, with the general taste of composition in the serious parts of the subject: nor is it an easy task to give any tolerable force to images of this kind, without running either into the gigantic expressions of the mock-heroic, or the familiar and poetical raillery of professed satire; neither of which would have been proper here.

The materials of all imitation being thus laid open, nothing now remain'd but to illustrate some particular pleasures which arise either from the relations of different objects one to another, or from the nature of imitation itself. Of the first kind is that various and complicated resemblance existing between several parts of the material and immaterial worlds, which is the foundation of metaphor and wit. As it seems in a great measure to depend on the early association of our ideas, and as this habit of associating is the source of many pleasures

and pains in life, and on that account bears a great share in the influence of poetry and the other arts, it is therefore mention'd here, and its effects describ'd. Then follows a general account of the production of these elegant arts, and of the secondary pleasure, as it is call'd, arising from the resemblance of their imitations to the original appearances of nature. After which, the work concludes with some reflections on the general conduct of the powers of imagination, and on their natural and moral usefulness in life.

Concerning the matter or turn of composition which prevails in this piece, little can be said with propriety by the author. He had two models ; that antient and simple one of the first *Græcian* poets, as it is refined by *Virgil* in the *Georgics*, and the familiar epistolary way of *Horace*. This latter has several advantages. It admits of a greater variety

variety of stile ; it more readily engages the generality of readers, as partaking more of the air of conversation ; and, especially with the assistance of rhyme, leads to a closer and more concise expression. Add to this the example of the most perfect of modern poets, who has so happily applied this manner to the noblest parts of philosophy, that the public taste is in a great measure formed to it alone. Yet, after all, the subject before us, tending almost constantly to admiration and enthusiasm, seem'd rather to demand a more open, pathetic and figur'd stile. This too appear'd more natural, as the author's aim was not so much to give formal precepts, or enter into the way of direct argumentation, as, by exhibiting the most engaging prospects of nature, to enlarge and harmonize the imagination, and by that means insensibly dispose the minds of men to a similar taste and habit of thinking in religion, morals and civil life. 'Tis

on this account that he is so careful to point out the benevolent intention of the Author of nature in every principle of the human constitution here insisted on; and also to unite the moral excellencies of life in the same point of view with the meer external objects of good taste; thus recommending them in common to our natural propensity for admiring what is beautiful and lovely. The same views have also led him to introduce some sentiments which may perhaps be look'd upon as not quite direct to the subject; but, since they bear an obvious relation to it, the authority of *Virgil*, the faultless model of didactic poetry, will best support him in this particular. For the sentiments themselves, he makes no apology.



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THE
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IMAGINATION.

BOOK THE FIRST.

ARGUMENT OF THE FIRST BOOK.

THE subject proposed; verſe 1, to 30. Difficulty of treating it poetically; ver. 45. The ideas of the divine mind, the origin of every quality pleaſing to the imagination; ver. 56, to 78. The natural variety of conſtitution in the minds of men, with its final cauſe; to ver. 96. The idea of a fine imagination, and the ſtate of the mind in the enjoyment of thoſe pleaſures which it affords; ver. 100, to 132. All the primary pleaſures of the imagination reſult from the perception of greatneſs, or wonderfulneſs, or beauty in objects; ver. 145. The pleaſure from greatneſs, with its final cauſe; ver. 151, to 221. Pleaſure from novelty or wonderfulneſs, with its final cauſe; ver. 222, to 270. Pleaſure from beauty, with its final cauſe; ver. 275, to 372. The connection of beauty with truth and good, applied to the conduct of life; ver. 384. Invitation to the ſtudy of moral philoſophy; to ver. 428. The different degrees of beauty in different ſpecies of objects; ver. 448. Colour; ſhape; natural coneretes; vegetables; animals; the mind; ver. 445, to 475. The ſublime, the fair, the wonderful of the mind; ver. 497, to 526. The connection of the imagination and the moral faculty; ver. 557. Concluſion.



THE
P L E A S U R E S
O F
I M A G I N A T I O N.
B O O K T H E F I R S T.

WITH what attractive charms this goodly frame
Of nature touches the consenting hearts
Of mortal men ; and what the pleasing flores
Which beauteous imitation thence derives
To deck the poet's, or the painter's toil ; 5
My verse unfolds. Attend, ye gentle Pow'rs
OF MUSICAL DELIGHT ! and while I sing
Your gifts, your honours, dance around my strain.

B

Thou,

Thou, smiling queen of every tuneful breast,
 Indulgent FANCY! from the fruitful banks 10
 Of Avon, whence thy rosy fingers cull
 Fresh flow'rs and dew's to sprinkle on the turf
 Where *Shakespeare* lies, be present: and with thee
 Let FICTION come, upon her fragrant wings
 Wafting ten thousand colours thro' the air, 15
 Which, by the glances of her magic eye,
 She blends and shifts at will, thro' countless forms,
 Her wild creation. Goddess of the lyre,
 Which rules the accents of the moving sphere,
 Wilt thou, eternal HARMONY! descend, 20
 And join this festive train? for with thee comes
 The guide, the guardian of their lovely sports,
 Majestic TRUTH; and where TRUTH deigns to come,
 Her sister LIBERTY will not be far.
 Be present all ye GENII, who conduct 25
 The wand'ring footsteps of the youthful bard,

B. I. OF IMAGINATION.

3

New to your springs and shades : who touch his ear
With finer sounds : who heighten to his eye
The bloom of nature, and before him turn
The gayest, happiest attitude of things. 30

Oft have the laws of each poetic strain
The critic-verse employ'd ; yet still unsung
Lay this prime subject, tho' importing most
A poet's name : for fruitless is th' attempt,
By dull obedience and by creeping toil 35
Obscure, to conquer the severe ascent
Of high Parnassus. Nature's kindling breath
Must fire the chosen genius ; nature's hand
Must string his nerves, and imp his eagle-wings
Impatient of the painful sleep, to soar 40
High as the summit : there to breathe at large
Ætherial air ; with bards and sages old,
Immortal sons of praise, These flatt'ring scenes

To this neglected labour court my song ;
Yet not unconscious what a doubtful task 45

To paint the finest features of the mind,

And to most subtle and mysterious things

Give colour, strength, and motion. But the love

Of nature and the muses bids explore,

Thro' secret paths erewhile untrod by man, 50

The fair poetic region, to detect

Untasted springs, to drink inspiring draughts,

And shade my temples with unfading flow'rs

Cull'd from the laureate vale's profound recess,

Where never poet gain'd a wreath before. 55

From heav'n my strains begin ; from heav'n descenda

The flame of genius to the human breast,

And love and beauty, and poetic joy

And inspiration. Ere the radiant sun

Sprang from the east, or 'mid the vault of night 60

The

B. I. OF IMAGINATION.

5

The moon suspended her serener lamp ;
 Ere mountains, woods, or streams adorn'd the globe,
 Or wisdom taught the sons of men her lore ;
 Then liv'd th' almighty ONE : then, deep retir'd
 In his unfathom'd essence, view'd the forms, 65
 The forms eternal of created things ;
 The radiant sun, the moon's nocturnal lamp,
 The mountains, woods and streams, the rolling globe,
 And wisdom's mien celestial. From the first
 Of days, on them his love divine he fix'd, 70
 His admiration : till in time compleat,
 What he admir'd and lov'd, his vital smile
 Unfolded into being. Hence the breath
 Of life informing each organic frame,
 Hence the green earth, and wild resounding waves ; 75
 Hence light and shade alternate ; warmth and cold ;
 And clear autumnal skies and vernal show'rs,
 And all the fair variety of things.

But not alike to every mortal eye
Is this great scene unveil'd. For since the claims 80
Of social life, to diff'rent labours urge
The active pow'rs of man ; with wise intent
The hand of Nature on peculiar minds
Imprints a diff'rent byass, and to each
Decrees its province in the common toil. 85
To some she taught the fabric of the sphere,
The changeful moon, the circuit of the stars,
The golden zones of heav'n : to some she gave
To weigh the moment of eternal things,
Of time, and space, and fate's unbroken chain, 90
And will's quick impulse : others by the hand
She led o'er vales and mountains, to explore
What healing virtue swells the tender veins
Of herbs and flow'rs ; or what the beams of morn
Draw forth, distilling from the clifted rind 95
In balmy tears. But some, to higher hopes

Were

B. I. OF IMAGINATION.

7

Were destin'd ; some within a finer mould

She wrought, and temper'd with a purer flame.

To these the Sire Omnipotent unfolds

The world's harmonious volume, there to read 100

The transcript of himself. On every part

They trace the bright impressions of his hand :

In earth or air, the meadow's purple stores,

The moon's mild radiance, or the virgin's form

Blooming with rosy smiles, they see portray'd 105

That uncreated beauty, which delights

The mind supreme. *They* also feel her charms,

Enamour'd ; *they* partake th' eternal joy.

For as old Memnon's image, long renown'd

By fabling Nilus, to the quiv'ring touch 110

Of Titan's ray, with each repulsive string

Consenting, founded thro' the warbling air.

Unbidden strains ; even so did Nature's hand

To certain species of eternal things,

Attune the finer organs of the mind : 115

So the glad impulse of congenial pow'rs,

Or of sweet sound, or fair-proportion'd form,

The grace of motion, or the bloom of light,

Thrills thro' imagination's tender frame,

From nerve to nerve : all naked and alive 120

They catch the spreading rays : till now the soul

At length discloses every tuneful spring,

To that harmonious movement from without

Responsive. Then the inexpressive strain

Diffuses its enchantment : fancy dreams 125

Of sacred fountains and Elyfian groves,

And vales of bliss : the intellectual pow'r

Bends from his awful throne a wond'ring ear,

And smiles : the passions, gently sooth'd away,

Sink to divine repose, and love and joy 130

Alone are waking ; love and joy, serene

B. I. OF IMAGINATION. 9

As airs that fan the summer. O! attend,
Whoe'er thou art, whom these delights can touch,
Whose candid bosom the refining love
Of Nature warms, O! listen to my song; 135
And I will guide thee to her fav'rite walks,
And teach thy solitude her voice to hear,
And point her loveliest features to thy view.

Know then, whate'er of Nature's pregnant stores,
Whate'er of mimic art's reflected forms 140
With love and admiration thus inflame
The pow'rs of fancy, her delighted sons
To three illustrious orders have referr'd;
Three sister-graces, whom the painter's hand,
The poet's tongue confesses; the *sublime*, 145
The *wonderful*, the *fair*. I see them dawn!
I see the radiant visions, where they rise,
More lovely than when Lucifer displays

His

His beaming forehead thro' the gates of morn,
To lead the train of Phœbus and the spring.

150

Say, why was man so eminently rais'd
Amid the vast creation ; why ordain'd

Say, why was man, &c.] In apologizing for the frequent negligences of the sublimest authors of Greece, Those god-like geniuses, says Longinus, were well assured, that Nature had not intended man for a low-spirited or ignoble being : but bringing us into life and the midst of this wide universe, as before a multitude assembled at some heroic solemnity, that we might be spectators of all her magnificence, and candidates high in emulation for the prize of glory ; she has therefore implanted in our souls an inextinguishable love of every thing great and exalted, of every thing which appears divine beyond our comprehension. Whence it comes to pass, that even the whole world is not an object sufficient for the depth and rapidity of human imagination, which often sallies forth beyond the limits of all that surround us. Let any man cast his eye through the whole circle of our existence, and consider how especially it abounds in excellent and grand objects, he will soon acknowledge for what enjoyments and pursuits we were destin'd. Thus by the very propensity of nature we are led to admire, not little springs or shallow rivulets, however clear and delicious, but the Nile, the Rhine, the Danube, and much more than all, the Ocean, &c. Dionys. Longin. de Sublim. § xxiv.

Thro'

B. I. OF IMAGINATION. 11

Thro' life and death to dart his piercing eye,
With thoughts beyond the limit of his frame ;
But that th' Omnipotent might fend him forth 155
In fight of mortal and immortal pow'rs,
As on a boundless theatre, to run
The great career of justice ; to exalt
His gen'rous aim to all diviner deeds ;
To chase each partial purpose from his breast ; 160
And thro' the mists of passion and of sense,
And thro' the tossing tide of chance and pain,
To hold his course unfalt'ring, while the voice
Of truth and virtue, up the steep ascent
Of nature, calls him to his high reward, 165
Th' applauding smile of heav'n ? Else wherefore burns
In mortal bosoms this unquenched hope,
That breathes from day to day sublimer things,
And mocks possession ? wherefore darts the mind,
With such resistless ardour to embrace 170

Majestic

Majestic forms ; impatient to be free,
Spurning the gross controul of wilful might ;
Proud of the strong contention of her toils ;
Proud to be daring ? Who but rather turns
To heav'n's broad fire his unconstrained view, 175
Than to the glimmering of a waxen flame ?
Who that, from Alpine heights, his lab'ring eye
Shoots round the wide horizon, to survey
Nilus or Ganges rowling his bright wave 179
Thro' mountains, plains, thro' empires black with shade,
And continents of sand ; will turn his gaze
To mark the windings of a scanty rill
That murmurs at his feet ? The high-born soul
Disdains to rest her heav'n-aspiring wing
Beneath its native quarry. Tir'd of earth 185
And this diurnal scene, she springs aloft
Thro' fields of air ; pursues the flying storm ;
Rides on the volley'd lightning thro' the heav'ns ;

Or

B. I. OF IMAGINATION. 13

Or yok'd with whirlwinds and the northern blast,
 Sweeps the long tract of day. Then high she soars 190
 The blue profound, and hovering round the sun
 Beholds him pouring the redundant stream
 Of light; beholds his unrelenting sway
 Bend the reluctant planets to absolve
 The fated rounds of time. Thence far effus'd 195
 She darts her swiftnefs up the long career
 Of devious comets; thro' its burning signs
 Exulting measures the perennial wheel
 Of Nature, and looks back on all the stars,
 Whose blended light, as with a milky zone, 200
 Invests the orient. Now amaz'd she views
 Th' empyreal waste, where happy spirits hold,

Beyond

Th' empyreal waste.] Ne se peut-il point qu'il y a un grand espace au delà de la region des etoiles? Que ce soit le ciel empyrée, ou non, toujours cet espace immense qui environne toute cette region, pourra être rempli de bonheur & de gloire.

Beyond this concave heav'n, their calm abode ;
 And fields of radiance, whose unfading light
 Has travell'd the profound six thousand years, 205
 Nor yet arrives in sight of mortal things.
 Ev'n on the barriers of the world untir'd
 She meditates th' eternal depth below ;
 Till, half recoiling, down the headlong steep 209
 She plunges ; soon o'erwhelm'd and swallow'd up
 In that immense of being. There her hopes
 Rest at the fated goal. For from the birth
 Of mortal man, the fovereign Maker said,
 That not in humble nor in brief delight,

gloire. Il pourra être conçu comme l'océan, où se rendent les fleuves de toutes les creatures bienheureuses, quand elles seront venues à leur perfection dans le système des étoiles. Leibnitz dans la Theodicée, part i. § 19.

Whose unfading light, &c.] It was a notion of the great Mr. *Huygens*, that there may be fixed stars at such a distance from our solar system, as that their light should not have had time to reach us, even from the creation of the world to this day.

B. I. OF IMAGINATION. 15

That not the fading echoes of renown, 215
Pow'r's purple robes, nor pleasure's flow'ry lap,
The soul should find enjoyment : but from these
Turning disdainful to an equal good,
Thro' all th' ascent of things enlarge her view,
Till every bound at length should disappear, 220
And infinite perfection close the scene.

Call now to mind what high capacious pow'rs
Lie folded up in man ; how far beyond
The praise of mortals, may th' eternal growth
Of Nature to perfection half divine, 225
Expand the blooming soul ? What pity then
Should sloth's unkindly fogs depress to earth
Her tender blossom ; choak the streams of life,
And blast her spring ! Far otherwise design'd
Almighty wisdom ; Nature's happy cares 230
Th' obedient heart far otherwise incline.

Witness

Witness the sprightly joy when aught unknown
 Strikes the quick sense, and wakes each active pow'r
 To brisker measures : witness the neglect
 Of all familiar prospects, tho' beheld

235

With

the neglect

Of all familiar prospects, &c.] It is here said, that in consequence of the love of novelty, objects which at first were highly delightful to the mind, lose that effect by repeated attention to them. But the instance of *habit* is opposed to this observation; for *there*, objects at first distasteful are in time render'd intirely agreeable by repeated attention.

The difficulty in this case will be removed, if we consider, that, when objects at first agreeable, lose that influence by frequently recurring, the mind is wholly *passive*, and the perception *involuntary*; but habit, on the other hand, generally supposes *choice* and *activity* accompanying it; so that the pleasure arises here not from the object, but from the mind's *conscious* determination of its own activity; and consequently increases in proportion to the frequency of that determination.

It will still be urged perhaps, that a familiarity with disagreeable objects renders them at length acceptable, even when there is no room for the mind to *resolve* or *act* at all. In this case, the appearance must be accounted for, one of these ways.

The

With transport once ; the fond attentive gaze

Of young astonishment ; the sober zeal

Of age, commenting on prodigious things.

For such the bounteous providence of heav'n,

The pleasure from habit may be merely negative. The object at first gave uneasiness: this uneasiness gradually wears off as the object grows familiar: and the mind, finding it at last intirely removed, reckons its situation really pleasurable, compar'd with what it had experienced before.

The dislike conceiv'd of the object at first, might be owing to prejudice or want of attention. Consequently the mind being necessitated to review it often, may at length perceive its own mistake, and be reconcil'd to what it had look'd on with aversion. In which case, a sort of instinctive justice naturally leads it to make amends for the injury, by running toward the other extreme of fondness and attachment.

Or lastly, tho' the object itself should always continue disagreeable, yet circumstances of pleasure or good fortune may occur along with it. Thus an association may arise in the mind, and the object never be remember'd without those pleasing circumstances attending it; by which means the disagreeable impression which it at first occasion'd will in time be quite obliterated.

In every breast implanting this desire 240
 Of objects new and strange, to urge us on
 With unremitted labour to pursue
 Those sacred stores that wait the ripening soul,
 In truth's exhaustless bosom. What need words
 To paint its pow'r ? For this, the daring youth 245
 Breaks from his weeping mother's anxious arms,
 In foreign climes to rove : the pensive sage,
 Heedless of sleep, or midnight's harmful damp,
 Hangs o'er the sickly taper ; and untir'd

——— *this desire*

Of objects new and strange——] These two ideas are oft
 confounded ; tho' it is evident the mere *novelty* of an object
 makes it agreeable, even where the mind is not affected with
 the least degree of *wonder* : whereas *wonder* indeed always
 implies *novelty*, being never excited by common or well-
 known appearances. But the pleasure in both cases is expli-
 cable from the same final cause, the acquisition of knowledge
 and enlargement of our views of nature ; on this account it
 is natural to treat of them together.

B. I. OF IMAGINATION. 19

The virgin follows, with enchanted step, 250
The mazes of some wise and wondrous tale,
From morn to eve ; unmindful of her form,
Unmindful of the happy drefs that stole
The wifhes of the youth, when every maid
With envy pin'd. Hence, finally, by night 255
The village-matron, round the blazing hearth,
Suspends the infant-audience with her tales,
Breathing astonishment ! of witching rhimes,
And evil fpirits ; of the death-bed call
Of him who robb'd the widow, and devour'd 260
The orphan's portion ; of unquiet foulds
Ris'n from the grave to ease the heavy guilt
Of deeds in life conceal'd ; of fshapes that walk
At dead of night, and clank their chains, and wave
The torch of hell around the murd'rer's bed. 265
At every folemn pause the croud recoil

Gazing each other speechless, and congeal'd
 With shiv'ring sighs : till eager for th' event,
 Around the beldame all arrest they hang,
 Each trembling heart with grateful terrors quell'd. 270

But lo ! disclos'd in all her smiling pomp
 Where BEAUTY onward moving claims the verse
 Her charms inspire : the freely-flowing verse
 In thy immortal praise, O form divine, 274
 Smooths her mellifluent stream. Thee, BEAUTY, thee
 The regal dome, and thy enlivening ray
 The mossy roofs adore : thou, better fun !
 For ever beamest on th' enchanted heart
 Love, and harmonious number, and delight
 Poetic. Brightest progeny of heav'n ! 280
 How shall I trace thy features ? where select
 The roseate hues to emulate thy bloom ?

Haste

B. I. OF IMAGINATION.

21

Haste then, my song, thro' Nature's wide expanse,

Haste then, and gather all her comeliest wealth,

Whate'er bright spoils the florid earth contains, 285

Whate'er the waters, or the liquid air,

To deck thy lovely labour. Wilt thou fly

With laughing Autumn to th' Atlantic isles,

And range with him th' Hesperian field, and see,

Where'er his fingers touch the fruitful grove, 290

The branches shoot with gold; where'er his step

Marks the glad soil, the tender clusters grow

With purple ripeness, and invest each hill

As with the blushes of an evening sky?

Or wilt thou rather stoop thy vagrant plume, 295

Where, gliding thro' his daughter's honour'd shades,

The smooth Penéus from his glassy flood

Reflects purpleal Tempe's pleasant scene?

Fair Tempe! haunt belov'd of sylvan powers,

Of nymphs and fauns; where in the golden age 300

They play'd in secret on the shady brink
 With ancient Pan : while round their choral steps
 Young Hours and genial Gales with constant hand
 Show'r'd blossoms, odours, show'r'd ambrosial dews,
 And spring's Elysian bloom. Her flow'ry store 305
 To thee nor Tempe shall refuse ; nor watch
 Of winged Hydra guard Hesperian fruits
 From thy free spoil. O bear then, unprov'd,
 Thy smiling treasures to the green recess
 Where young Dione stays. With sweetest airs 310
 Intice her forth to lend her angel-form
 For Beauty's honour'd image. Hither turn
 Thy graceful footsteps ; hither, gentle maid,
 Incline thy polish'd forehead : let thy eyes
 Effuse the mildness of their azure dawn ; 315
 And may the fanning breezes waft aside
 Thy radiant locks : disclosing, as it bends
 With airy softness from the marble neck,

B. I. OF IMAGINATION. 23

The cheek fair-blooming, and the rosy lip,
Where winning smiles and pleasure sweet as love, 320
With sanctity and wisdom, temp'ring blend
Their soft allurements. Then the pleasing force
Of Nature, and her kind parental care
Worthier I'd sing: then all th' enamour'd youth,
With each admiring virgin, to my lyre 325
Should throng attentive, while I point on high
Where Beauty's living image, like the morn
That wakes in Zephyr's arms the blushing May,
Moves onward; or as Venus, when she stood
Effulgent on the pearly car, and smil'd 330
Fresh from the deep, and conscious of her form,
To see the Tritons tune their vocal shells,
And each cœrulean sister of the flood
With loud acclaim attend her o'er the waves,
To seek th' Idalian bow'r. Ye smiling band 335
Of youths and virgins, who thro' all the maze

Of young Desire with rival-steps pursue
This charm of beauty ; if the pleasing toil
Can yield a moment's respite, hither turn
Your favourable ear, and trust my words. 340

I do not mean to wake the gloomy form
Of Superstition dress'd in Wisdom's garb,
To damp your tender hopes ; I do not mean
To bid the jealous thund'rer fire the heav'ns,
Or shapes infernal rend the groaning earth 345

To fright you from your joys : my chearful song
With better omens calls you to the field,
Pleas'd with your generous ardour in the chace,
And warm like you. Then tell me, for ye know,
Does beauty ever deign to dwell where health 350

And active use are strangers ? Is her charm
Confess'd in aught, whose most peculiar ends
Are lame and fruitless ? Or did Nature mean
This pleasing call the herald of a lye ;

To

B. I. OF IMAGINATION. 25

To hide the shame of discord and disease, 355

And catch with fair hypocrisy the heart

Of idle faith? O no! with better cares

Th' indulgent mother, conscious how infirm

Her offspring tread the paths of good and ill,

By this illustrious image, in each kind 360

Still most illustrious where the object holds

Its native pow'rs most perfect, she by this

Illumes the headstrong impulse of desire,

And sanctifies his choice. The gen'rous glebe

Whose bosom smiles with verdure, the clear tract 365

Of streams delicious to the thirsty soul,

The bloom of nectar'd fruitage ripe to sense,

And every charm of animated things,

Are only pledges of a state sincere,

Th' integrity and order of their frame, 370

When all is well within, and every end

Accomplish'd. Thus was Beauty sent from heav'n,

The

The lovely miniftrifs of truth and good

In this dark world : for truth and good are one,

And Beauty dwells in them, and they in her, 375

With

— Truth and good are one,

*And Beauty dwells in them, &c.] Do you imagine, fays So-
crates to Ariftippus, that what is good is not alfo beautiful?
Have you not obfer-v'd that thefe appearances always coin-
cide? Virtue, for inftance, in the fame refpect as to which we
call it good, is ever acknowledged to be beautiful alfo. In
the characters of men we always * join the two denominations
together. The beauty of human bodies corresponds, in like
manner, with that æconomy of parts which conftitutes them
good; and in every circumftance of life, the fame object is
conftantly accounted both beautiful and good, inasmuch as it
answers the purpofes for which it was defigned. Xenophont.
Memorab. Socrat. l. iii. c. 8.*

This excellent obfervation has been illuftrated and ex-
tended by the noble reftorer of ancient philofophy; *fee the
characterifticks*, vol. ii. p. 339 and 422. and vol. iii. p. 181.
And another ingenious author has particularly fhewn, that
it holds in the general laws of nature, in the works of art,
and the conduct of the fciences. *Inquiry into the original of
our ideas of beauty and virtue*, Treat. i. § 8. As to the con-

* This the Athenians did in a peculiar manner by the word καλο-
καγαθός, καλοκαγαθία.

With like participation. Wherefore then,

O fons of earth ! would ye dissolve the tye ?

O where-

nexion between *beauty* and *truth*, there are two opinions concerning it. Some philosophers assert an independent and invariable law in nature, in consequence of which *all rational beings must alike perceive beauty in some certain proportions, and deformity in the contrary*. And this necessity being supposed the same with that which commands the assent or dissent of the understanding, it follows of course that *beauty* is founded on the universal and unchangeable law of *truth*.

But others there are who believe *beauty* to be merely a relative and arbitrary thing ; that indeed it was a benevolent provision in nature to annex so delightful a sensation to those objects which are *best and most perfect in themselves*, that so we might be engaged to the choice of them at once, and without staying to infer their *usefulness* from their structure and effects ; but that it is not impossible, in a physical sense, that two beings, of equal capacities for *truth*, should perceive, one of them *beauty*, and the other *deformity*, in the same proportions. And upon this supposition by that *truth* which is always connected with *beauty*, nothing more can be meant than the conformity of any object to those proportions upon which, after careful examination, the beauty of that species is found to depend. *Polycletus*, for instance, a famous ancient sculptor, from an accurate mensuration of the several parts of the most perfect human bodies, deduced
a canon

O wherefore, with a rash impetuous aim,
 Seek ye those flow'ry joys with which the hand
 Of lavish Fancy paints each flatt'ring scene 380
 Where beauty seems to dwell, nor once inquire
 Where is the sanction of eternal truth,
 Or where the seal of undeceitful good,
 To save your search from folly? Wanting these,
 Lo! Beauty withers in your void embrace, 385
 And with the glitt'ring of an idiot's toy
 Did Fancy mock your vows. Nor let the gleam
 Of youthful hope that shines upon your hearts,
 Be chill'd or clouded at this awful task,
 To learn the lore of undeceitful good, 390

a canon or system of proportions, which was the rule of all
 succeeding artists. Suppose a statue modelled according to
 this canon: a man of mere natural taste, upon looking at
 it, without entering into its proportions, confesses and ad-
 mires its *beauty*; whereas a professor of the art applies his
 measures to the head, the neck, or the hand, and, without
 attending to its beauty, pronounces the workmanship to be
just and true.

And

And truth eternal. Tho' the pois'nous charms
 Of baleful Superstition guide the feet
 Of fervile numbers, thro' a dreary way
 To their abode, thro' defarts, thorns and mire;
 And leave the wretched pilgrim all forlorn 395
 To muse at last, amid the ghostly gloom
 Of graves, and hoary vaults, and cloister'd cells;
 To walk with spectres thro' the midnight shade,
 And to the screaming owl's accursed song
 Attune the dreadful workings of his heart, 400
 Yet be not ye dismay'd. A gentle star
 Your lovely searh illumines. From the grove
 Where wisdom talk'd with her Athenian sons,
 Could my ambitious hand intwine a wreath
 Of PLATO's olive with the Mantuan bay, 405
 Then should my pow'rful voice at once dispell
 Those monkish horrors: then in light divine
 Disclose th' Elysian prospect, where the steps

Of those whom Nature charms, thro' blooming walks,
 Thro' fragrant mountains and poetic streams, 410
 Amid the train of sages, heroes, bards,
 Led by their winged Genius and the choir
 Of laurell'd Science and harmonious Art,
 Proceed exulting to th' eternal shrine,
 Where Truth conspicuous with her sister-twins, 415
 The undivided partners of her sway,
 With Good and Beauty reigns. O let not us,
 Lull'd by luxurious Pleasure's languid strain,
 Or crouching to the frowns of Bigot-rage,
 O let not us a moment pause to join 420
 That godlike band. And if the gracious pow'r
 Who first awaken'd my untutor'd song,
 Will to my invocation breathe anew
 The tuneful spirit; then thro' all our paths,
 Ne'er shall the sound of this devoted lyre 425
 Be wanting; whether on the rosy mead,

When

B. I. OF IMAGINATION. 31

When summer smiles, to warn the melting heart
Of luxury's allurements; whether firm
Against the torrent and the stubborn hill
To urge bold virtue's unremitted nerve, 430
And wake the strong divinity of soul
That conquers chance and fate; or whether struck
For sounds of triumph, to proclaim her toils
Upon the lofty summit, round her brow
To twine the wreath of incorruptive praise; 435
To trace her hallow'd light thro' future worlds,
And bless heav'n's image in the heart of man.

Thus with a faithful aim have we presum'd,
Advent'rous, to delineate Nature's form;
Whether in vast, majestic pomp array'd, 440
Or dress'd for pleasing wonder, or serene
In beauty's rosy smile. It now remains,
Thro' various being's fair-proportion'd scale,

To

To trace the rising lustre of her charms,
From their first twilight, shining forth at length 445
To full meridian splendour. Of degree
The least and lowliest, in th' effusive warmth
Of colours mingling with a random blaze,
Doth beauty dwell. Then higher in the line
And variation of determin'd shape, 450
Where Truth's eternal measures mark the bound
Of circle, cube, or sphere. The third ascent
Unites this varied symmetry of parts
With colour's bland allurements; as the pearl
Shines in the concave of its azure bed, 455
And painted shells indent their speckled wreath.
Then more attractive rise the blooming forms
Thro' which the breath of Nature has infus'd
Her genial pow'r to draw with pregnant veins
Nutritious moisture from the bounteous earth, 460
In fruit and seed prolific: thus the flow'rs
Their

Their purple honours with the spring resume ;
 And thus the stately tree which autumn bends
 With blushing treasures. But more lovely still
 Is Nature's charm, where to the full consent 465
 Of complicated members, to the bloom
 Of colour, and the vital change of growth,
 Life's holy flame and piercing sense are giv'n,
 And active motion speaks the temper'd soul :
 So moves the bird of Juno ; so the steed 470
 With rival ardour beats the dusty plain,
 And faithful dogs with eager air of joy
 Salute their fellows. Thus doth beauty dwell
 There most conspicuous, even in outward shape,
 Where dawns the high expression of a mind : 475
 By steps conducting our inraptur'd search
 To that eternal origin, whose pow'r,
 Thro' all th' unbounded symmetry of things,
 Like rays effulging from the parent sun,

This endless mixture of her charms diffus'd. 480

MIND, MIND alone, (bear witness, earth and heav'n !)

The living fountains in itself contains

Of beauteous and sublime : here hand in hand,

Sit paramount the Graces ; here inthron'd,

Cœlestial Venus, with divinest airs, 485

Invites the soul to never-fading joy.

Look then abroad thro' Nature, to the range

Of planets, suns, and adamantinè spheres

Wheeling unshaken thro' the void immense ;

And speak, O man ! does this capacious scene 490

With half that kindling majesty dilate

Thy strong conception, as when Brutus rose

Refulgent from the stroke of Cæsar's fate,

Amid the crowd of patriots : and his arm

As when Brutus rose, &c.] Cicero himself describes this fact — Casare interfecto — statim cruentum altè extollens M. Brutus pugionem, Ciceronem nominatim exclamavit, atque ei recuperatam libertatem est gratulatus. Cic. Philipp. ii. 12.

B. I. OF IMAGINATION. 35

Aloft extending, like eternal Jove 495
 When guilt brings down the thunder, call'd aloud
 On Tully's name, and shook his crimson steel,
 And bade the father of his country, hail!
 For lo! the tyrant prostrate on the dust,
 And Rome again is free! — Is aught so fair 500
 In all the dewy landscapes of the spring,
 In the bright eye of Hesper or the morn,
 In nature's fairest forms, is aught so fair
 As virtuous friendship? as the candid blush
 Of him who strives with fortune to be just? 505
 The graceful tear that streams from other's woes?
 Or the mild majesty of private life,
 Where peace with ever-blooming olive crowns
 The gate; where honour's liberal hands effuse
 Unenvy'd treasures, and the snowy wings 510
 Of Innocence and Love protect the scene?
 Once more search, undismay'd, the dark profound

Where nature works in secret ; view the beds
 Of min'ral treasure, and th' eternal vault
 That bounds the hoary ocean ; trace the forms 515
 Of atoms moving with incessant change
 Their elemental round ; behold the seeds
 Of being, and the energy of life
 Kindling the mass with ever-active flame :
 Then to the secrets of the working mind 520
 Attentive turn ; from dim oblivion call
 Her fleet, ideal band ; and bid them, go !
 Break thro' Time's barrier, and o'ertake the hour
 That saw the heav'ns created : then declare
 If aught were found in those external scenes 525
 To move thy wonder now. For what are all
 The forms which brute, unconscious matter wears,
 Greatness of bulk, or symmetry of parts ?
 Not reaching to the heart, soon feeble grows
 The superficial impulse ; dull their charms, 530
 And

B. I. OF IMAGINATION. 37

And satiate soon, and pall the languid eye.
Not so the moral species, nor the pow'rs
Of genius and design; the ambitious mind
There sees herself: by these congenial forms
Touch'd and awaken'd, with intenser act 535
She bends each nerve, and meditates well-pleas'd
Her features in the mirror. For of all
Th' inhabitants of earth, to man alone
Creative wisdom gave to lift his eye
To truth's eternal measures; thence to frame 540
The sacred laws of action and of will,
Discerning justice from unequal deeds,
And temperance from folly. But beyond
This energy of truth, whose dictates bind
Assenting reason, the benignant fire, 545
To deck the honour'd paths of just and good,
Has added bright imagination's rays:

Where virtue, rising from the awful depth
 Of truth's mysterious bosom, doth forsake
 The unadorn'd condition of her birth ; 550
 And dress'd by fancy in ten thousand hues,
 Assumes a various feature, to attract,
 With charms responsive to each gazer's eye,
 The hearts of men. Amid his rural walk,
 Th' ingenuous youth whom solitude inspires 555
 With purest wishes, from the pensive shade
 Beholds her moving, like a virgin-muse
 That wakes her lyre to some indulgent theme
 Of harmony and wonder : while among
 The herd of servile minds, her strenuous form 560

Where virtue rising from the awful depth

Of truth's mysterious bosom, &c.] According to the opinion of those who assert moral Obligation to be founded on an immutable and universal law, and that which is usually called the moral sense, to be determined by the peculiar temper of the imagination and the earliest associations of ideas.

Indignant

Indignant flashes on the patriot's eye,
And thro' the rolls of memory appeals
To ancient honour, or in act serene,
Yet watchful, raises the majestic sword
Of public pow'r, from dark ambition's reach 565
To guard the sacred volume of the law.

Genius of ancient Greece ! whose faithful steps
Well-pleas'd I follow thro' the sacred paths
Of nature and of science ; nurse divine
Of all heroic deeds and fair desires ! 570
O ! let the breath of thy extended praise
Inspire my kindling bosom to the height
Of this untempted theme. Nor be my thoughts
Presumptuous counted, if amid the calm
That sooths this vernal evening into smiles, 575
I steal impatient from the fordid haunts
Of strife and low ambition, to attend

Thy sacred presence in the sylvan shade,
 By their malignant footsteps ne'er profan'd.
 Descend, propitious ! to my favour'd eye ; 580
 Such in thy mien, thy warm, exalted air,
 As when the Persian tyrant, foil'd and stung
 With shame and desperation, gnash'd his teeth
 To see thee rend the pageants of his throne ;
 And at the lightning of thy lifted spear 585
 Crouch'd like a slave. Bring all thy martial spoils,
 Thy palms, thy laurels, thy triumphal songs,
 Thy smiling band of arts, thy godlike fires
 Of civil wisdom, thy heroic youth
 Warm from the schools of glory. Guide my way 590
 Thro' fair Lycéum's walk, the green retreats
 Of Academus, and the thymy vale,
 Where oft enchanted with Socratic sounds,

Lycéum.] The school of *Aristotle*.

Academus.] The school of *Plato*.

B. I. OF IMAGINATION. 41

Ilissus pure devolv'd his tuneful stream
In gentler murmurs. From the blooming store 595
Of these auspicious fields, may I unblam'd
Transplant some living blossoms to adorn
My native clime : while far above the flight
Of fancy's plume aspiring, I unlock
The springs of ancient wisdom ; while I join 600
Thy name thrice honour'd ! with th' immortal praise
Of nature ; while to my compatriot youth
I point the high example of thy sons,
And tune to Attic themes the British lyre.

Ilissus.] One of the rivers on which *Athens* was situated.
Plato, in some of his finest dialogues, lays the scene of the
conversation with *Socrates* on its banks.

END OF THE FIRST BOOK.

THE

THE
MAGNIFICENT
SECOND

THE
PLEASURES
OF
IMAGINATION.
BOOK THE SECOND.

ARGUMENT OF THE SECOND BOOK.

THE separation of the works of imagination from philosophy, the cause of their abuse among the moderns; to verse 41. Prospect of their re-union under the influence of public liberty; to ver. 61. Enumeration of accidental pleasures which increase the effect of objects delightful to the imagination. The pleasures of sense; ver. 73. Particular circumstances of the mind; ver. 84. Discovery of truth; ver. 97. Perception of contrivance and design; ver. 121. Emotions of the passions; ver. 136. All the natural passions partake of a pleasing sensation, with the final cause of this constitution illustrated by an allegorical vision, and exemplified in sorrow, pity, terror, and indignation; from ver. 155 to the end.

THE
P L E A S U R E S
O F
I M A G I N A T I O N.
B O O K T H E S E C O N D.

WHEN shall the laurel and the vocal string
Resume their honours ? When shall we behold
The tuneful tongue, the Promethéan hand
Aspire to ancient praise ? Alas ! how faint,
How slow the dawn of Beauty and of Truth 5
Breaks the reluctant shades of Gothic night
Which yet involve the nations ! Long they groan'd
Beneath the Furies of rapacious force ;

Of

Oft as the gloomy north, with iron-swarms
 Tempestuous pouring from her frozen caves, 10
 Blasted th' Italian shore, and swept the works
 Of liberty and wisdom down the gulph
 Of all-devouring night. As long immur'd
 In noon-tide darkness by the glimmering lamp,
 Each Muse and each fair Science pin'd away 15
 The sordid hours: while foul, barbarian hands
 Their mysteries profan'd, unstrung the lyre,
 And chain'd the soaring pinion down to earth.
 At last the Muses rose, and spurn'd their bonds,

And

At last the Muses rose, &c.] About the age of *Hugh Capet*, founder of the third race of *French* kings, the poets of *Provence* were in high reputation; a sort of strolling bards or rhapsodists, who went about the courts of princes and noblemen, entertaining them at festivals with music and poetry. They attempted both the epic, ode, and satire, and abounded in a wild and fantastic vein of fable, partly allegorical, and partly founded on traditionary legends of the *Saracen* wars. These were the rudiments of *Italian* poetry. But
 their

B. II. OF IMAGINATION. 47

And wildly warbling, scatter'd, as they flew, 20
 Their blooming wreaths from fair Valclusa's bow'rs
 To Arno's myrtle border and the shore
 Of soft Parthenope. But still the rage
 Of dire ambition and gigantic pow'r,

From

their taste and composition must have been extremely barbarous, as we may judge by those who followed the turn of their fable in much politer times; such as *Boiardo*, *Bernardo Tasso*, *Ariosto*, &c.

Valclusa.] The famous retreat of *Francesco Petrarca*, the father of *Italian* poetry, and his mistress *Laura*, a lady of *Avignon*.

Arno.] The river which runs by *Florence*, the birth-place of *Dante* and *Boccaccio*.

Parthenope.] Or *Naples*, the birth-place of *Sannazaro*. The great *Torquato Tasso* was born at *Servanto* in the kingdom of *Naples*.

— the rage

Of dire ambition, &c.] This relates to the cruel wars among the republics of *Italy*, and the abominable politics of its little princes, about the fifteenth century. These at last, in conjunction with the papal power, intirely extinguished the spirit of liberty in that country, and established that abuse

From public aims and from the busy walk 25

Of civil commerce, drove the bolder train

Of penetrating Science to the cells,

Where studious ease consumes the silent hour

In shadowy searches and unfruitful care.

Thus from their guardians torn, the tender arts 30

Of

abuse of the fine arts which has been since propagated over all Europe.

Thus from their guardians torn, the tender arts, &c.] Nor were they only losers by the separation. For philosophy itself, to use the words of a noble philosopher, being thus severed from the sprightly arts and sciences, must consequently grow dronish, insipid, pedantic, useless, and directly opposite to the real knowledge and practice of the world. Infomuch that a gentleman, says another excellent writer, cannot easily bring himself to like so austere and ungainly a form: so greatly is it changed from what was once the delight of the finest gentlemen of antiquity, and their recreation after the hurry of public affairs! From this condition it cannot be recovered but by uniting it once more with the works of imagination; and we have had the pleasure of observing a very great progress made towards their union in England within these few years. It is hardly possible to conceive them at a greater distance

B. II. OF IMAGINATION.

49

Of mimic fancy and harmonious joy,

To priestly domination and the lust

Of lawless courts, their amiable toil

For three inglorious ages have resign'd,

In vain reluctant: and Torquato's tongue

35

Was tun'd for slavish pæans at the throne

Of tinsel pomp: and Raphael's magic hand

Effus'd its fair creation to enchant

The fond adoring herd in Latian fanes

To blind belief; while on their prostrate necks

40

The fable tyrant plants his heel secure.

distance from each other than at the revolution, when *Locke* stood at the head of one party, and *Dryden* of the other. But the general spirit of liberty, which has ever since been growing, naturally invited our men of wit and genius to improve that influence which the arts of persuasion gave them with the people, by applying them to subjects of importance to society. Thus poetry and eloquence became considerable; and philosophy is now of course obliged to borrow of their embellishments, in order even to gain audience with the public.

E

But

But now behold ! the radiant æra dawns,
 When freedom's ample fabric, fix'd at length
 For endless years on Albion's happy shore
 In full proportion, once more shall extend 45
 'To all the kindred pow'rs of social bliss
 A common mansion, a parental roof.
 There shall the Virtues, there shall Wisdom's train,
 Their long-lost friends rejoining, as of old,
 Embrace the smiling family of arts, 50
 The Muses and the Graces. Then no more
 Shall vice, distracting their delicious gifts
 To aims abhorr'd, with high distaste and scorn
 Turn from their charms the philosophic eye,
 The patriot-bosom ; then no more the paths 55
 Of public care or intellectual toil,
 Alone by footsteps haughty and severe
 In gloomy state be trod : th' harmonious Muse
 And her persuasive sisters then shall plant
 Their

B. II. OF IMAGINATION. 51

Their shelt'ring laurels o'er the bleak ascent, 60

And scatter flow'rs along the rugged way.

Arm'd with the lyre, already have we dar'd

To pierce divine philosophy's retreats,

And teach the muse her lore ; already strove

Their long-divided honours to unite, 65

While temp'ring this deep argument we sang

Of truth and beauty. Now the same glad task

Impends ; now urging our ambitious toil,

We hasten to recount the various springs

Of adventitious pleasure, which adjoin 70

Their grateful influence to the prime effect

Of objects grand or beauteous, and inlarge

The complicated joy. The sweets of sense,

Do they not oft with sweet accession flow,

To raise harmonious fancy's native charm ? 75

So while we taste the fragrance of the rose,

Glow not her blush the fairer ? While we view

Amid the noontide walk a limpid rill
 Gush thro' the trickling herbage, to the thirst
 Of summer yielding the delicious draught 80
 Of cool refreshment; o'er the mossy brink
 Shines not the surface clearer, and the waves
 With sweeter music murmur as they flow?

Nor this alone; the various lot of life
 Oft from external circumstance assumes 85
 A moment's disposition to rejoice
 In those delights which at a different hour
 Would pass unheeded. Fair the face of spring,
 When rural songs and odours wake the morn,
 To every eye; but how much more to his 90
 Round whom the bed of sickness long diffus'd
 Its melancholy gloom! how doubly fair,
 When first with fresh-born vigour *he* inhales
 The balmy breeze, and feels the blessed sun

Warm

B. II. OF IMAGINATION. 53

Warm at his bosom, from the springs of life 95

Chasing oppressive damps and languid pain!

Or shall I mention, where cœlestial truth

Her awful light discloses, to bestow

A more majestic pomp on beauty's frame?

For man loves knowledge, and the beams of truth 100

More welcome touch his understanding's eye,

Than all the blandishments of sound his ear,

Than all of taste his tongue. Nor ever yet

The melting rainbow's vernal-tinctur'd hues

To me have shone so pleasing, as when first 105

The hand of Science pointed out the path

In which the sun-beams gleaming from the west

Fall on the watry cloud, whose darksome veil

Involves the orient; and that trickling show'r

Piercing thro' ev'ry crytalline convex 110

Of clust'ring dew-drops to their flight oppos'd,

Recoil at length where concave all behind
Th' internal surface of each glassy orb
Repells their forward passage into air ;
That thence direct they seek the radiant goal 115
From which their course began ; and, as they strike
In diff'rent lines the gazer's obvious eye,
Assume a diff'rent lustre, thro' the brede
Of colours changing from the splendid rose
To the pale violet's dejected hue. 120

Or shall we touch that kind access of joy,
That springs to each fair object, while we trace,
Thro' all its fabric, wisdom's artful aim
Disposing every part, and gaining skill
By means proportion'd her benignant end ? 125
Speak, ye, the pure delight, whose favour'd steps
The lamp of Science thro' the jealous maze
Of Nature guides, when haply you reveal

Her

B. II. OF IMAGINATION. 55

Her secret honours : whether in the sky,
The beauteous laws of light, the central pow'rs 130
That wheel their planets round their various year ;
Whether in wonders of the rowling deep,
Or the rich fruits of all-sustaining earth,
Or fine-adjusted springs of life and sense,
Ye scan the counsels of their Author's hand. 135

What, when to raise the meditated scene,
The flame of passion, thro' the struggling soul
Deep-kindled, shows across that sudden blaze
The object of its rapture, vast of size,
With fiercer colours and a night of shade ? 140
What ? like a storm from their capacious bed
The founding seas o'erwhelming, when the might
Of these eruptions, working from the depth
Of man's strong apprehension, shakes his frame
Ev'n to the base ; from every naked sense 145

Of pain or pleasure dissipating all
 Opinion's feeble cov'rings, and the veil
 Spun from the cobweb-fashion of the times
 To hide the feeling heart? Then Nature speaks
 Her genuine language, and the words of men, 150
 Big with the very motion of their souls,
 Declare with what accumulated force,
 Th' impetuous nerve of passion urges on
 The native weight and energy of things.

Yet more; her honours where nor beauty claims,
 Nor shews of good the thirsty sense allure, 156
 From passion's pow'r alone our Nature holds

Essential

From passion's pow'r alone, &c.] This very mysterious kind of pleasure, which is often found in the exercise of passions generally counted painful, has been taken notice of by several authors. *Lucretius* resolves it into self-love.

Suave mari magno, &c. lib. ii. 1.

As

Essential pleasure. Passion's fierce illapse
 Rouzes the mind's whole fabric; with supplies
 Of daily impulse keeps th' elastic pow'rs
 Intensely poiz'd, and polishes anew
 By that collision all the fine machine:
 Else rust would rise, and foulness, by degrees
 Incumb'ring, choak at last what heav'n design'd
 For ceaseless motion and a round of toil.
 —But say, does every passion thus to man

As if a man was never pleased in being moved at the distress of a tragedy, without a cool reflection that though these fictitious personages were so unhappy, yet he himself was perfectly at ease, and in safety. The ingenious author of the *Reflexions critiques sur la poesie et la peinture*, accounts for it by the general delight which the mind takes in its own activity, and the abhorrence it feels of an indolent and inattentive state: And this, joined with that moral approbation of its own temper, which attends these emotions when natural and just, is certainly the true foundation of the pleasure, which as it is the origin and basis of tragedy and epic, deserved a very particular consideration in this poem.

Administer

Administer delight? That name indeed
Becomes the rosy breath of love; becomes
The radiant smiles of joy, th' applauding hand
Of admiration: but the bitter show'r 170
That sorrow sheds upon a brother's grave,
But the dumb palsy of nocturnal fear,
Or those consuming fires that gnaw the heart
Of panting indignation, find we there
To move delight?—Then listen, while my tongue 175
Th' unalter'd will of heav'n with faithful awe
Reveals; what old Harmodius wont to teach
My early age; Harmodius, who hath weigh'd
Within his learned mind whate'er the schools
Of wisdom, or thy lonely-whisp'ring voice, 180
O faithful Nature! dictate of the laws
Which govern and support this mighty frame
Of universal being. Oft the hours
From morn to eve have stol'n unmark'd away,

While

While mute attention hung upon his lips, 185

As thus the sage his awful tale began.

'Twas in the windings of an ancient wood,
When spotless youth to solitude resigns

To sweet philosophy the studious day,

What time pale autumn shades the silent eve, 190

Musing I rov'd. Of good and evil much,

And much of mortal man my thought revolv'd;

When starting full on fancy's gushing eye,

The mournful image of Parthenia's fate,

That hour, O long belov'd and long deplor'd! 195

When blooming youth, nor gentlest wisdom's arts,

Nor Hymen's honours gather'd for thy brow,

Nor all thy lover's, all thy father's tears

Avail'd to snatch thee from the cruel grave;

Thy agonizing looks, thy last farewell 200

Struck to the inmost feeling of my soul

As with the hand of death. At once the shade
 More horrid nodded o'er me; and the winds
 With hoarser murm'ring shook the branches. Dark
 As midnight storms, the scene of human things
 Appear'd before me; desarts, burning sands,
 Where the parch'd adder dies; the frozen south,
 And desolation blasting all the west
 With rapine and with murder: tyrant pow'r
 Here sits enthron'd in blood; the baleful charms
 Of superstition there infect the skies,
 And turn the sun to horror. Gracious heav'n!
 What is the life of man? Or cannot these,
 Not these portents thy awful will suffice?
 That, propagated thus beyond their scope,
 They rise to act their cruelties anew
 In my afflicted bosom, thus decreed
 The universal sensitive of pain,
 The wretched heir of evils not its own

Thus I impatient ; when, at once effus'd, 220
 A flashing torrent of cœlestial day
 Burst thro' the shadowy void. With slow descent
 A purple cloud came floating thro' the sky,
 And pois'd at length within the circling trees,
 Hung obvious to my view ; till opening wide 225
 Its lucid orb, a more than human form
 Emerging lean'd majestic o'er my head,
 And instant thunder shook the conscious grove.
 Then melted into air the liquid cloud,
 And all the shining vision stood reveal'd. 230
 A wreath of palm his ample forehead bound,
 And o'er his shoulder, mantling to his knee,
 Flow'd the transparent robe, around his waist
 Collected with a radiant zone of gold
 Æthereal : there in mystic signs ingrav'd, 235
 I read his office high and sacred name,
 Genius of human kind. Appall'd I gaz'd

The godlike presence ; for athwart his brow
 Displeasure, temper'd with a mild concern,
 Look'd down reluctant on me, and his words 240
 Like distant thunders broke the murm'ring air.

* Vain are thy thoughts, O child of mortal birth,
 And impotent thy tongue. Is thy short span
 Capacious of this universal frame?
 Thy wisdom all-sufficient ? Thou, alas ! 245
 Dost thou aspire to judge between the Lord
 Of nature and his works ? to lift thy voice
 Against the sov'reign order he decreed
 All good and lovely ? to blaspheme the bands
 Of tenderness innate and social love, 250
 Holiest of things ! by which the general orb
 Of being, as by adamantine links,
 Was drawn to perfect union and sustain'd
 From everlasting ? Hast thou felt the pangs

B. II. OF IMAGINATION. 63

Of softning sorrow, of indignant zeal 255

So grievous to the soul, as thence to wish

The ties of nature broken from thy frame ;

That so thy selfish, unrejenting heart

Might cease to mourn its lot, no longer then

The wretched heir of evils not its own ? 260

O fair benevolence of gen'rous minds !

O man by nature form'd for all mankind !

He spoke ; abash'd and silent I remain'd,

As conscious of my tongue's offence, and aw'd

Before his presence, tho' my secret soul 265

Disdain'd the imputation. On the ground

I fix'd my eyes ; till from his airy couch

He stoop'd sublime, and touching with his hand

My dazzled forehead, Raise thy sight, he cry'd,

And let thy sense convince thy erring tongue. 270

I look'd, and lo! the former scene was chang'd;
For verdant alleys and surrounding trees,
A solitary prospect, wide and wild,
Rush'd on my senses. 'Twas an horrid pile
Of hills with many a shaggy forest mix'd, 275
With many a sable cliff and glitt'ring stream.
Aloft recumbent o'er the hanging ridge,
The brown woods wav'd; while ever-trickling springs
Wash'd from the naked roots of oak and pine
The crumbling soil; and still at every fall 280
Down the steep windings of the channel'd rock,
Remurm'ring rush'd the congregated floods
With hoarser inundation; till at last
They reach'd a grassy plain, which from the skirts
Of that high desert spread her verdant lap, 285
And drank the gushing moisture, where confin'd
In one smooth current, o'er the lili'd vale
Clearer than glass it flow'd. Autumnal spoils

Luxuriant

B. II. OF IMAGINATION. 65

Luxuriant spreading to the rays of morn,
 Blush'd o'er the cliffs, whose half-incircling mound 290
 As in a sylvan theatre inclos'd
 That flow'ry level. On the river's brink
 I spy'd a fair pavilion, which diffus'd
 Its floating umbrage 'mid the silver shade
 Of osiers. Now the western sun reveal'd 295
 Between two parting cliffs his golden orb,
 And pour'd across the shadow of the hills,
 On rocks and floods, a yellow stream of light
 That cheer'd the solemn scene. My list'ning pow'rs
 Were aw'd, and every thought in silence hung, 300
 And wond'ring expectation. Then the voice
 Of that celestial pow'r, the mystic flow
 Declaring, thus my deep attention call'd.

Inhabitant of earth, to whom is giv'n

The

Inhabitant of earth, &c] The account of the œconomy
 of providence here introduced, as the most proper to calm

F

and

The gracious ways of providence to learn, 305

Receive my sayings with a stedfast ear —

Know then, the sov'reign spirit of the world,

Tho' self-collected from eternal time,

Within his own deep essence he beheld

The

and satisfy the mind, when under the compunction of private evils, seems to have come originally from the *Pythagorean* school: but of the ancient philosophers, *Plato* has most largely insisted upon it, has established it with all the strength of his capacious understanding, and ennobled it with all the magnificence of his divine imagination. He has one passage so full and clear on this head, that I am persuaded the reader will be pleased to see it here, though somewhat long. Addressing himself to such as are not satisfied concerning divine providence, *The being who presides over the whole*, says he, *has disposed and complicated all things for the happiness and virtue of the whole, every part of which, according to the extent of its influence, does and suffers what is fit and proper. One of these parts is yours, O unhappy man, which though in itself most inconsiderable and minute, yet being connected with the universe, ever seeks to co-operate with that supreme order. You in the mean time are ignorant of the very end for which all particular natures are brought into existence, that the all-comprehending nature*
of

B. II. OF IMAGINATION. 67

The bounds of true felicity compleat ; 310

Yet by immense benignity inclin'd

To spread around him that primæval joy

Which fill'd himself, he rais'd his plastic arm,

And

of the whole may be perfect and happy ; existing, as it does, not for your sake, but the cause and reason of your existence, which, as in the symmetry of every artificial work, must of necessity concur with the general design of the artist, and be subservient to the whole of which it is a part. Your complaint therefore is ignorant and groundless ; since, according to the various energy of creation, and the common laws of nature, there is a constant provision of that which is best at the same time for you and for the whole.—For the governing intelligence clearly beholding all the actions of animated and self-moving creatures, and that mixture of good and evil which diversifies them, considered first of all by what disposition of things and by what situation of each individual in the general system, vice might be depressed and subdued, and virtue made secure of victory and happiness with the greatest facility and in the highest degree possible : In this manner he ordered through the entire circle of being, the internal constitution of every mind, where should be its station in the universal fabric, and through what variety of

And founded thro' the hollow depth of space

The strong, creative mandate. Strait arose 315

'These heav'nly orbs, the glad abodes of life

Effusive kindled by his breath divine

Thro' endless forms of being. Each inhal'd

From him its portion of the vital flame,

In measure such, that, from the wide complex 320

circumstances it should proceed in the whole tenour of its existence. He goes on in his sublime manner to assert a future state of retribution, as well for those who, by the exercise of good dispositions being harmonized and assimilated into the divine virtue, are consequently removed to a place of unblemished sanctity and happiness; as of those who by the most flagitious arts have risen from contemptible beginnings to the greatest affluence and power, and whom you therefore look upon as unanswerable instances of negligence in the gods, because you are ignorant of the purposes to which they are subservient, and in what manner they contribute to that supreme intention of good to the whole. Plato de Leg. x. 16.

This theory has been delivered of late, especially abroad, in a manner which subverts the freedom of human actions; whereas *Plato* appears very careful to preserve it, and has been in that respect imitated by the best of his followers.

Of

B. II. OF IMAGINATION. 69

Of coexistent orders, *one* might rise,
One order, all-involving and intire.
 He too beholding in the sacred light
 Of his essential reason, all the shapes
 Of swift contingency, all successive ties 325
 Of action propagated thro' the sum
 Of possible existence, he at once,
 Down the long series of eventful time,
 So fix'd the dates of being, so dispos'd,
 To every living soul of every kind 330
 The field of motion and the hour of rest,
 That all conspir'd to his supreme design,
 To universal good: with full accord
 Answering the mighty model he had chos'n,
 The best and fairest of unnumber'd worlds 335
 That

—— *one might rise,*

One order, &c.] See the meditations of *Antoninus*, and
 the *Characteristicks*, passim.

The best and fairest, &c.] This opinion is so old, that

That lay from everlasting in the store
 Of his divine conceptions. Nor content,
 By *one* exertion of creative pow'r
 His goodness to reveal; thro' every age,
 Thro' every moment up the tract of time 340
 His parent-hand with ever-new increase
 Of happiness and virtue has adorn'd
 The vast harmonious frame: his parent-hand,
 From the mute shell-fish gasping on the shore,
 To men, to angels, to cœlestial minds 345
 For ever leads the generations on

Timæus Locrus calls the supreme being *δαμινγὸς τῷ Βέλτι-
 ονῷ*, the artificer of that which is best; and represents him
 as resolving in the beginning to produce the most excellent
 work, and as copying the world most exactly from his own
 intelligible and essential idea; so that it yet remains, as it
 was at first, perfect in beauty, and will never stand in
 need of any correction or improvement. There can be no
 room for a caution here, to understand the expressions, not
 of any particular circumstances of human life separately
 considered, but of the sum or universal system of life and
 being. See also the vision at the end of the *Theodicæe* of
Leibnitz.

To

B. II. OF IMAGINATION. 71

To higher scenes of being ; while supply'd
 From day to day with his enliv'ning breath,
 Inferior orders in succession rise
 To fill the void below. As flame ascends, 350
 As bodies to their proper center move,
 As the pois'd ocean to th' attracting moon
 Obedient swells, and every headlong stream
 Devolves its winding waters to the main ;
 So all things which have life aspire to God, 355
 The sun of being, boundless, unimpair'd,
 Center of souls ! Nor does the faithful voice
 Of nature cease to prompt their eager steps
 Aright ; nor is the care of heav'n withheld
 From granting to the task proportion'd aid ; 360
 That in their stations all may persevere

As flame ascends, &c.] This opinion, though not held by
Plato nor any of the ancients, is yet a very natural conse-
 quence of his principles. But the disquisition is too complex
 and extensive to be entered upon here.

To climb th' ascent of being, and approach
For ever nearer to the life divine.

That rocky pile thou see'st, that verdant lawn
Fresh-water'd from the mountains. Let the scene 365
Paint in thy fancy the primæval seat
Of man, and where the will supreme ordain'd
His mansion, that pavilion far-diffus'd
Along the shady brink ; in this recess
To wear th' appointed season of his youth, 370
Till riper hours should open to his toil
The high communion of superior minds,
Of consecrated heroes and of gods.
Nor did the fire omnipotent forget
His tender bloom to cherish ; nor withheld 375
Cœlestial footsteps from his green abode.
Oft from the radiant honours of his throne,
He sent whom most he lov'd, the sov'reign fair,

B. II. OF IMAGINATION. 73

The effluence of his glory, whom he plac'd

Before his eyes for ever to behold ; 380

The goddess from whose inspiration flows

The toil of patriots, the delight of friends ;

Without whose work divine, in heav'n or earth,

Nought lovely, nought propitious comes to pass,

Nor hope, nor praise, nor honour. Her the fire 385

Gave it in charge to rear the blooming mind,

The folded pow'rs to open, to direct

The growth luxuriant of his young desires,

And from the laws of this majestic world

To teach him what was good. As thus the nymph 390

Her daily care attended, by her side

With constant steps her gay companion stay'd,

The fair Euphrosyné, the gentle queen

Of smiles, and graceful gladness, and delights

That cheer alike the hearts of mortal men 395

And pow'rs immortal. See the shining pair !

Behold,

Behold,

Behold, where from his dwelling now disclos'd
They quit their youthful charge and seek the skies.

I look'd, and on the flow'ry turf there stood
Between two radiant forms a smiling youth 400
Whose tender cheeks display'd the vernal flow'r
Of beauty; sweetest innocence illum'd
His bashful eyes, and on his polish'd brow
Sate young Simplicity. With fond regard
He view'd th' associates, as their steps they mov'd; 405
The younger chief his ardent eyes detain'd,
With mild regret invoking her return.
Bright as the star of evening she appear'd
Amid the dusky scene. Eternal youth
O'er all her form its glowing honours breath'd; 410
And smiles eternal, from her candid eyes
Flow'd like the dewy lustre of the morn
Effusive trembling on the placid waves.

B. II. OF IMAGINATION. 75

The spring of heav'n had shed its blushing spoils
To bind her sable tresses: full diffus'd 415
Her yellow mantle floated in the breeze;
And in her hand she wav'd a living branch
Rich with immortal fruits, of pow'r to calm
The wrathful heart, and from the bright'ning eyes,
To chase the cloud of sadness. More sublime 420
The heav'nly part'ner mov'd. The prime of age
Compos'd her steps. The presence of a god,
High on the circle of her brow inthron'd,
From each majestic motion darted awe,
Devoted awe! till, cherish'd by her looks 425
Benevolent and meek, confiding love
To filial rapture soften'd all the soul.
Free in her graceful hand she pois'd the sword
Of chaste dominion. An heroic crown
Display'd the old simplicity of pomp 430
Around her honour'd head. A matron's robe,

White as the sunshine streams thro' vernal clouds,
Her stately form invested. Hand in hand
Th' immortal pair forsook th' enamell'd green,
Ascending slowly. Rays of limpid light 435
Gleam'd round their path; cœlestial sounds were heard,
And thro' the fragrant air æthereal dews
Distill'd around them; till at once the clouds
Disparting wide in midway sky, withdrew
Their airy veil, and left a bright expanse 440
Of empyréan flame, where spent and drown'd,
Afflicted vision plung'd in vain to scan
What object it involv'd. My feeble eyes
Indur'd not. Bending down to earth I stood,
With dumb attention. Soon a female voice, 445
As watry murmurs sweet, or warbling shades,
With sacred invocation thus began.

B. II. OF IMAGINATION. 77

Father of gods and mortals ! whose right arm
With reins eternal guides the moving heav'ns,
Bend thy propitious ear. Behold well-pleas'd 450
I seek to finish thy divine decree.

With frequent steps I visit yonder seat
Of man, thy offspring ; from the tender seeds
Of justice and of wisdom, to evolve

The latent honours of his generous frame ; 455

Till thy conducting hand shall raise his lot

From earth's dim scene to these æthereal walks,

The temple of thy glory. But not me,

Not my directing voice he oft requires,

Or hears delighted : this enchanting maid, 460

Th' associate thou hast giv'n me, her alone

He loves, O Father ! absent, her he craves ;

And but for her glad presence ever join'd,

Rejoices not in mine : that all my hopes

This thy benignant purpose to fulfil, 465

I deem

I deem uncertain : and my daily cares
Unfruitful all and vain, unless by thee
Still farther aided in the work divine.

She ceas'd ; a voice more awful thus reply'd.
O thou ! in whom for ever I delight, 470
Fairer than all th' inhabitants of heav'n,
Best image of thy author ! far from thee
Be disappointment, or distaste, or blame ;
Who soon or late shalt every work fulfil,
And no resistance find. If man refuse 475
To hearken to thy dictates ; or allur'd
By meaner joys, to any other pow'r
Transfer the honours due to thee alone ;
That joy which he pursues he ne'er shall taste,
That pow'r in whom delighteth ne'er behold. 480
Go then, once more, and happy be thy toil ;
Go then ! but let not this thy smiling friend

B. II. OF IMAGINATION. 79

Partake thy footsteps. In her stead, behold!

With thee the son of Nemesis I send;

The fiend abhorr'd! whose vengeance takes account

Of sacred order's violated laws. 486

See where he calls thee, burning to be gone,

Fierce to exhaust the tempest of his wrath

On yon devoted head. But thou, my child,

Controul his cruel frenzy, and protect 490

Thy tender charge; that when despair shall grasp

His agonizing bosom, he may learn,

Then he may learn to love the gracious hand

Alone sufficient in the hour of ill,

To save his feeble spirit; then confess 495

Thy genuine honours, O excelling fair!

When all the plagues that wait the deadly will

Of this avenging dæmon, all the storms

Of night infernal, serve but to display

The energy of thy superior charms 500

With

With mildest awe triumphant o'er his rage,
And shining clearer in the horrid gloom.

Here ceas'd that awful voice, and soon I felt
The cloudy curtain of refreshing eve
Was clos'd once more, from that immortal fire 505
Shelt'ring my eye-lids. Looking up, I view'd
A vast gigantic spectre striding on
Thro' murm'ring thunders and a waste of clouds,
With dreadful action. Black as night his brow
Relentless frowns involv'd. His savage limbs 510
With sharp impatience violent he writh'd,
As thro' convulsive anguish; and his hand,
Arm'd with a scorpion lash, full oft he rais'd
In madness to his bosom; while his eyes
Rain'd bitter tears, and bellowing loud he shook 515
The void with horror. Silent by his side
The virgin came. No discomposure stirr'd

Her

B. II. OF IMAGINATION. 81

Her features. From the glooms which hung around
No stain of darkness mingled with the beam
Of her divine effulgence. Now they stoop 520
Upon the river-bank : and now to hail
His wonted guests, with eager steps advanc'd
The unsuspecting inmate of the shade.

As when a famish'd wolf, that all night long
Had rang'd the Alpine snows, by chance at morn 525
Sees from a cliff incumbent o'er the smoke
Of some lone village, a neglected kid
That strays along the wild for herb or spring ;
Down from the winding ridge he sweeps amain,
And thinks he tears him : so with tenfold rage, 530
The monster sprung remorseless on his prey.
Amaz'd the stripling stood : with panting breast
Feebly he pour'd the lamentable wail
Of helpless consternation, struck at once,

G

And

And rooted to the ground. The queen beheld 535
 His terror, and with looks of tend'rest care
 Advanc'd to save him. Soon the tyrant felt
 Her awful pow'r. His keen, tempestuous arm
 Hung nerveless, nor descended where his rage
 Had aim'd the deadly blow : then dumb retir'd 540
 With fullen rancour. Lo ! the sov'reign maid
 Folds with a mother's arms the fainting boy,
 Till life rekindles in his rosy cheek ;
 Then grasps his hand, and cheers him with her tongue.

O wake thee, rouse thy spirit ! Shall the spite 545
 Of yon tormentor thus apall thy heart,
 While I, thy friend and guardian, am at hand
 To rescue and to heal ? O let thy soul
 Remember, what the will of heav'n ordains
 Is ever good for all ; and if for all, 550
 Then good for thee. Nor only by the warmth

B. II. OF IMAGINATION. 83

And soothing sunshine of delightful things,
 Do minds grow up and flourish. Oft misled
 By that bland light, the young unpractis'd views
 Of reason wander thro' a fatal road, 555
 Far from their native aim : as if to lye
 Inglorious in the fragrant shade, and wait
 The soft access of ever-circling joys,
 Were all the end of being. Ask thyself,
 This pleasing error did it never lull 560
 Thy wishes ? Has thy constant heart refus'd
 The silken fetters of delicious ease ?
 Or when divine Euphrosyné appear'd
 Within this dwelling, did not thy desires
 Hang far below that measure of thy fate, 565
 Which I reveal'd before thee ? and thy eyes,
 Impatient of my counsels, turn away
 To drink the soft effusion of her smiles ?
 Know then, for this the everlasting fire

Deprives thee of her presence, and instead, 570
O wife and still benevolent ! ordains
This horrid visage hither to pursue
My steps ; that so thy nature may discern
Its real good, and what alone can save
Thy feeble spirit in this hour of ill 575
From folly and despair. O yet belov'd !
Let not this headlong terror quite o'erwhelm
Thy scatter'd pow'rs ; nor fatal deem the rage
Of this tormentor, nor his proud assault,
While I am here to vindicate thy toil, 580
Above the generous question of thy arm.
Brave by thy fears, and in thy weakness strong,
This hour he triumphs ; but confront his might,
And dare him to the combat, then with ease
Disarm'd and quell'd, his fierceness he resigns 585
To bondage and to scorn : while thus inur'd
By watchful danger, by unceasing toil,

Th'

B. II. OF IMAGINATION. 85

Th' immortal mind, superior to his fate,
Amid the outrage of external things,
Firm as the solid base of this great world, 590
Rests on his own foundations. Blow, ye winds!
Ye waves! ye thunders! rowl your tempest on;
Shake, ye old pillars of the marble sky!
Till all its orbs and all its worlds of fire
Be loosen'd from their seats; yet still serene, 595
Th' unconquer'd mind looks down upon the wreck,
And ever stronger as the storms advance,
Firm thro' the closing ruin holds his way,
Where nature calls him to the destin'd goal.

So spake the goddess: while thro' all her frame 600
Cœlestial raptures flow'd, in every word,
In every motion kindling warmth divine
To seize who listen'd. Vehement and swift
As light'ning flies the aromatic shade

In Æthiopian fields, the stripling felt 605
 Her inspiration catch his fervid soul,
 And starting from his languor thus exclaim'd.

Then let the trial come ! and witness thou,
 If terror be upon me ; if I shrink
 To meet the storm, or falter in my strength 610
 When hardest it befalls me. Do not think
 That I am fearful and infirm of soul,
 As late thy eyes beheld : for thou hast chang'd
 My nature : thy commanding voice has wak'd
 My languid pow'rs to bear me boldly on, 615
 Where'er the will divine my path ordains
 Thro' toil or peril ! only do not thou
 Forsake me ; O be thou for ever near,
 That I may listen to thy sacred voice,
 And guide by thy decrees my constant feet. 620
 But say, for ever are my eyes bereft ?

Say,

B. II. OF IMAGINATION.

87

Say, shall the fair Euphrosyné not once
Appear again to charm me ? Thou, in heav'n !
O thou eternal arbiter of things !

Be thy great bidding done : for who am I 625

To question thy appointment ? Let the frowns

Of this avenger every morn o'ercast

The chearful dawn, and every evening damp

With double night my dwelling ; I will learn

To hail them both, and unrepining bear 630

His hateful presence : but permit my tongue

One glad request, and if my deeds may find

Thy awful eye propitious, O restore

The rosy featur'd maid ; again to chear

This lonely seat, and blefs me with her smiles. 635

He spoke ; when instant thro' the fable glooms

With which that furious presence had involv'd

The ambient air, a flood of radiance came

Swift as the light'ning flash ; the melting clouds
 Flew diverse, and amid the blue serene 640
 Euphrosyné appear'd. With sprightly step
 The nymph alighted on th' irriguous lawn,
 And to her wond'ring audience thus began.

Lo ! I am here to answer to your vows,
 And be the meeting fortunate ! I come 645
 With joyful tidings ; we shall part no more —
 Hark ! how the gentle Echo from her cell
 Talks thro' the cliffs, and murm'ring o'er the stream
 Repeats the accents ; we shall part no more.
 O my delightful friends ! well-pleas'd on high 650
 The father has beheld you, while the might
 Of that stern foe with bitter trial prov'd
 Your equal doings ; then for ever spake
 The high decree : that thou, cœlestial maid !
 Howe'er that griesly phantom on thy steps 655

May

B. II. OF IMAGINATION. 89

May sometimes dare intrude, yet never more
Shalt thou, descending to th' abode of man,
Alone endure the rancour of his arm,
Or leave thy lov'd Euphrosyné behind.

She ended ; and the whole romantic scene 660
Immediate vanish'd : rocks, and woods, and rills,
The mantling tent, and each mysterious form
Flew like the pictures of a morning dream,
When sun-shine fills the bed. A while I stood
Perplex'd and giddy ; till the radiant pow'r 665
Who bade the visionary landscape rise,
As up to him I turn'd, with gentlest looks
Preventing my inquiry, thus began.

There let thy soul acknowledge its complaint
How blind, how impious ! There behold the ways 670
Of heav'n's eternal destiny to man,

For

For ever just, benevolent and wise :
That VIRTUE's awful steps, howe'er pursued
By vexing fortune and intrusive PAIN,
Should never be divided from her chaste, 675
Her fair attendant, PLEASURE. Need I urge
Thy tardy thought through all the various round
Of this existence, that thy soft'ning soul
At length may learn what energy the hand
Of virtue mingles in the bitter tide 680
Of passion swelling with distress and pain,
To mitigate the sharp with gracious drops
Of cordial pleasure ? Ask the faithful youth,
Why the cold urn of her whom long he lov'd
So often fills his arms ; so often draws 685
His lonely footsteps at the silent hour,
To pay the mournful tribute of his tears ?
O ! he will tell thee, that the wealth of worlds
Should ne'er seduce his bosom to forego

B. II. OF IMAGINATION. 91

That sacred hour, when, stealing from the noise 690
Of care and envy, sweet remembrance sooths
With virtue's kindest looks his aching breast,
And turns his tears to rapture — Ask the crowd
Which flies impatient from the village-walk
To climb the neighb'ring cliffs, when far below 695
The cruel winds have hurl'd upon the coast
Some helpless bark ; while sacred pity melts
The gen'ral eye, or terror's icy hand
Smites their distorted limbs and horrent hair ;
While every mother closer to her breast 700
Catches her child, and pointing where the waves
Foam thro' the shatter'd vessel, shrieks aloud
As one poor wretch that spreads his piteous arms
For succour, swallow'd by the roaring surge,
As now another, dash'd against the rock, 705
Drops lifeless down : O dearest thou indeed
No kind endearment here by nature giv'n

To

To mutual terror and compassion's tears ?
 No sweetly-melting softness which attracts,
 O'er all that edge of pain, the social pow'rs 710
 To this their proper action and their end ?
 —Ask thy own heart ; when at the midnight hour,
 Slow thro' that studious gloom thy pausing eye
 Led by the glimm'ring taper moves around
 The sacred volumes of the dead, the songs 715
 Of Græcian bards, and records writ by fame
 For Græcian heroes, where the present pow'r
 Of heav'n and earth surveys th' immortal page,
 E'en as a father blessing, while he reads
 The praises of his son. If then thy soul, 720
 Spurning the yoke of these inglorious days,
 Mix in their deeds and kindle with their flame ;
 Say, when the prospect blackens on thy view,
 When rooted from the base, heroic states
 Mourn in the dust and tremble at the frown 725

Of curst ambition ; when the pious band
 Of youths that fought for freedom and their fires,
 Lie side by side in gore ; when ruffian-pride
 Usurps the throne of justice, turns the pomp
 Of public pow'r, the majesty of rule, 730
 The sword, the laurel, and the purple robe,
 To slavish empty pageants, to adorn
 A tyrant's walk, and glitter in the eyes
 Of such as bow the knee ; when honour'd urns
 Of patriots and of chiefs, the awful built 735
 And storied arch, to glut the coward-rage
 Of regal envy, strew the public way
 With hallow'd ruins ; when the muse's haunt,
 The marble porch where wisdom wont to talk
 With Socrates or Tully, hears no more, 740
 Save the hoarse jargon of contentious monks,
 Or female Superstition's midnight pray'r ;
 When ruthless Rapine from the hand of Time

Tears

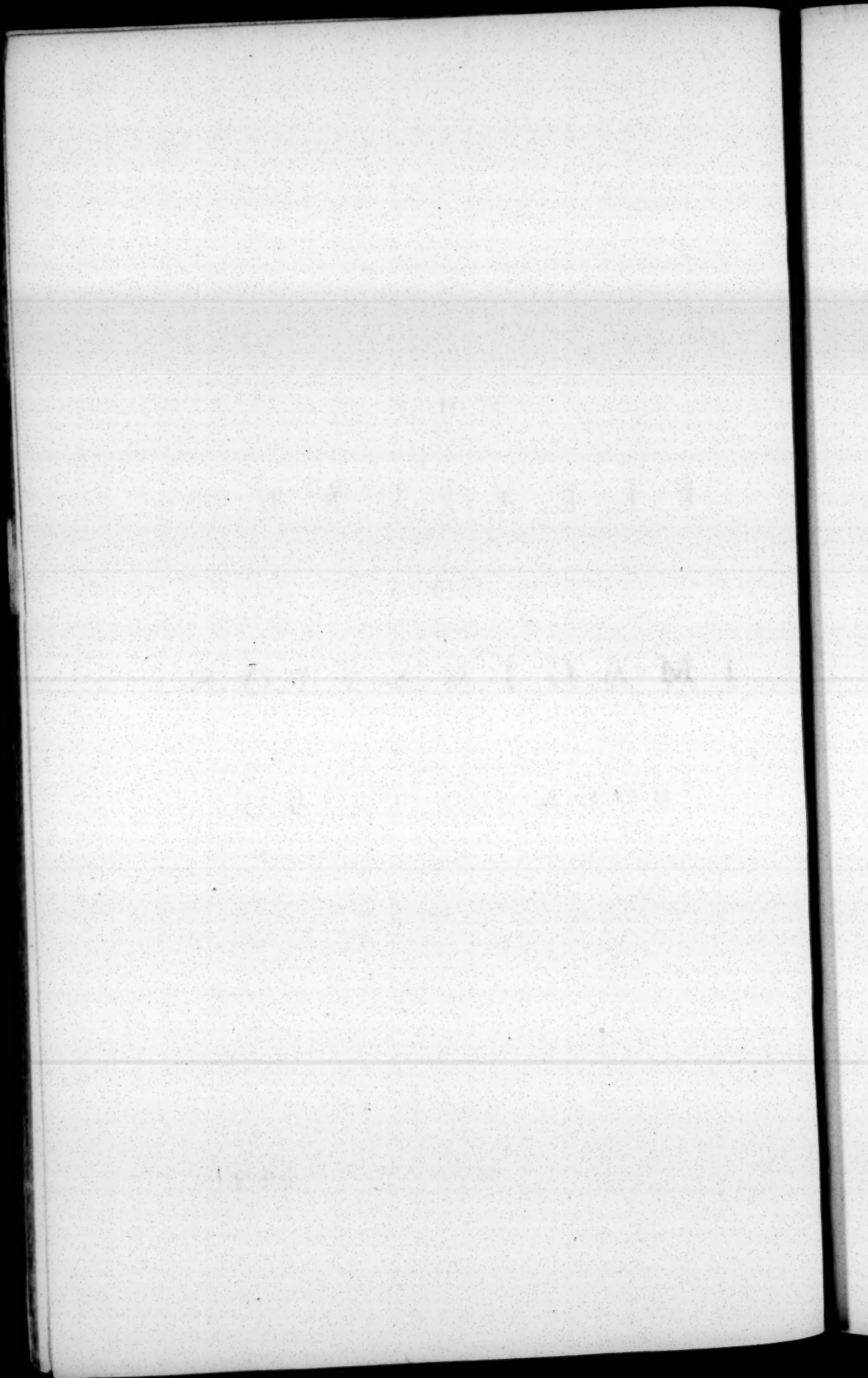
Tears the destroying scythe, with surer blow
 To sweep the works of glory from their base ; 745
 Till Desolation o'er the grass-grown street
 Expands his raven-wings, and up the wall,
 Where senates once the pride of monarchs doom'd,
 Hisses the gliding snake thro' hoary weeds
 That clasp the mould'ring column ; thus defac'd, 750
 Thus widely mournful when the prospect thrills
 Thy beating bosom, when the patriot's tear
 Starts from thine eye, and thy extended arm
 In fancy hurls the thunderbolt of Jove
 To fire the impious wreath on Philip's brow, 755
 Or dash Octavius from the trophied car ;
 Say, does thy secret soul repine to taste
 The big distress ? Or would'st thou then exchange
 Those heart-ennobling sorrows for the lot
 Of him who sits amid the gaudy herd 760

Philip.] The Macedonian.

Of

Of mute barbarians bending to his nod,
And bears aloft his gold-invested front,
And says within himself, “ I am a king,
“ And wherefore should the clam’rous voice of woe
“ Intrude upon mine ear ?—” The baleful dregs 765
Of these late ages, this inglorious draught
Of servitude and folly, have not yet,
Blest be th’ eternal ruler of the world !
Defil’d to such a depth of fordid shame
The native honours of the human soul, 770
Nor so effac’d the image of its fire.

END OF THE SECOND BOOK.



THE
PLEASURES
OF
IMAGINATION.

BOOK THE THIRD.

H

ARGU-

ARGUMENT OF THE THIRD BOOK.

PLEASURE in observing the tempers and manners of men, even where vicious or absurd; verse 1, to 14. The origin of vice, from false representations of the fancy, producing false opinions concerning good and evil; ver. 14, to 62. Inquiry into ridicule; ver. 73. The general sources of ridicule in the minds and characters of men, enumerated; ver. 14, to 240. Final cause of the sense of ridicule; ver. 263. The resemblance of certain aspects of inanimate things to the sensations and properties of the mind; ver. 282, to 311. The operations of the mind in the production of the works of imagination, described; ver. 358, to 414. The secondary pleasure from imitation; to ver. 436. The benevolent order of the world illustrated in the arbitrary connection of these pleasures with the objects which excite them; ver. 458, to 514. The nature and conduct of taste; ver. 515, to 567. Concluding with an account of the natural and moral advantages resulting from a sensible and well-form'd imagination.

THE
PLEASURES
OF
IMAGINATION.
BOOK THE THIRD.

WHAT wonder therefore, since th' indearing ties
Of passion link the universal kind
Of man so close, what wonder if to search
This common nature thro' the various change
Of sex, and age, and fortune, and the frame 5
Of each peculiar, draw the busy mind
With unresisted charms? The spacious west,
And all the teeming regions of the south

Hold not a quarry, to the curious flight
 Of knowledge, half so tempting or so fair, 10
 As man to man. Nor only where the smiles
 Of love invite; nor only where th' applause
 Of cordial honour turns th' attentive eye
 On virtue's graceful deeds. For since the course
 Of things external acts in different ways 15
 On human apprehensions, as the hair
 Of nature temper'd to a different frame
 Peculiar minds; so haply where the pow'rs
 Of fancy neither lessen nor enlarge

The

— *where the pow'rs*

Of fancy, &c.] The influence of the imagination on the
 conduct of life, is one of the most important points in
 moral philosophy. It were easy by an induction of facts to
 prove that the imagination directs almost all the passions,
 and mixes with almost every circumstance of action or plea-
 sure. Let any man, even of the coldest head and soberest
 industry, analyse the idea of certain degrees of decency,
 beauty, and order, variously combined into one system, the
 idol

B. III. OF IMAGINATION. 101

The images of things, but paint in all 20

Their genuine hues, the features which they wore

In nature ; there, opinion will be true,

And action right. For action treads the path

In which opinion says he follows good,

Or

idol which he seeks to enjoy by labour, hazard and self-denial. It is on this account of the last consequence to regulate these images by the standard of nature and the general good ; otherwise the imagination, by heightening some objects beyond their real excellence and beauty, or by representing others in a more odious or terrible shape than they deserve, may of course engage us in pursuits utterly inconsistent with the moral order of things.

If it be objected that this account of things supposes the passions to be merely accidental, whereas there appears in some a natural and hereditary disposition to certain passions prior to all circumstances of education or fortune ; it may be answered, that though no man is born *ambitious* or a *miser*, yet he may inherit from his parents a peculiar temper or complexion of mind, which shall render his imagination more liable to be struck with some particular objects, consequently dispose him to form opinions of good and ill, and entertain passions of a particular turn. Some men, for

H 3

instance,

Or flies from evil ; and opinion gives 25

Report of good or evil, as the scene

Was drawn by fancy, lovely or deform'd :

Thus her report can never there be true,

Where fancy cheats the intellectual eye

With

instance, by the original frame of their minds, are more delighted with the vast and magnificent, others on the contrary with the elegant and gentle aspects of nature. And it is very remarkable, that the disposition of the moral powers is always similar to this of the imagination; that those who are most inclined to admire prodigious and sublime objects in the physical world, are also most inclined to applaud examples of fortitude and heroic virtue in the moral. While those who are charmed rather with the *delicacy* and *sweetness* of colours, and forms, and sounds, never fail in like manner to yield the preference to the softer scenes of virtue and the sympathies of a domestic life. And this is sufficient to account for the objection.

Among the ancient philosophers, though we have several hints concerning this influence of the imagination upon morals among the remains of the *Socratic* school, yet the *Stoics* were the first who paid it a due attention. *Zeno*, their founder, thought it impossible to preserve any tolerable regu-

larity

B. III. OF IMAGINATION. 103

With glaring colours and distorted lines. 30

Is there a man, who at the sound of death

Sees ghastly shapes of terror conjur'd up,

And black before him ; nought but death-bed groans

And fearful pray'rs, and plunging from the brink

Of light and being, down the gloomy air, 35

An unknown depth ? Alas ! in such a mind,

If no bright forms of excellence attend

The image of his country ; nor the pomp

Of sacred senates, nor the sacred voice

larity in life, without frequently inspecting those pictures or appearances of things, which the imagination offers to the mind (*Diog. Laert.* l. vii.) The meditations of *M. Aurelius*, and the discourses of *Epiſtetus*, are full of the same sentiments ; inſomuch that the latter makes the *Χρῆσις οἷα δὲ παλαίστῃ* or *right management of the fancies*, the only thing for which we are accountable to providence, and without which a man is no other than stupid or frantic. *Arrian.* l. i. c. 12. & l. ii. c. 22. See also the *Characteristics*, vol. i. from p. 313 to 321. where this *Stoical* doctrine is embellished with all the elegance and graces of *Plato*.

Of Justice on her throne, nor ought that wakes 40

The conscious bosom with a patriot's flame ;

Will not opinion tell him, that to die,

Or stand the hazard, is a greater ill

Than to *betray* his country ? And in act

Will he not chuse to be a wretch and live ? 45

Here vice begins then. From th' enchanting cup

Which Fancy holds to all, th' unwary thirst

Of youth oft swallows a Circæan draught,

That sheds a baleful tincture o'er the eye

Of reason, 'till no longer he discerns, 50

And only guides to err. Then revel forth

A furious band that spurn him from the throne ;

And all is uproar. Thus Ambition grasps

The empire of the soul : thus pale Revenge

Unsheaths her murd'rous dagger ; and the hands 55

Of Lust and Rapine, with unholy arts,

Watch to o'erturn the barrier of the laws

B. III. OF IMAGINATION. 105

That keeps them from their prey : thus all the plagues

The wicked bear, or o'er the trembling scene

The tragic Muse discloses, under shapes 60

Of honour, safety, pleasure, ease or pomp,

Stole first into the mind. Yet not by all

Those lying forms which fancy in the brain

Engenders, are the kindling passions driv'n

To guilty deeds ; nor Reason bound in chains, 65

That Vice alone may lord it : oft adorn'd

With solemn pageants, Folly mounts his throne,

And plays her idiot-anticks, like a queen.

A thousand garbs she wears ; a thousand ways

She wheels her giddy empire.—Lo ! thus far 70

With bold adventure, to the Mantuan lyre

I sing of nature's charms, and touch well-pleas'd

A stricter note : now haply must my song

Unbend her serious measure, and reveal

In

In lighter strains, how Folly's awkward arts 75
 Excite impetuous Laughter's gay rebuke ;
 The sportive province of the comic Muse.

See ! in what crowds the uncouth forms advance,
 Each would outstrip the other, each prevent
 Our careful search, and offer to your gaze,
 Unask'd, his motly features. Wait awhile,
 My curious friends ! and let us first arrange
 In proper order your promiscuous throng.

— *how Folly's awkward arts, &c.*] Notwithstanding the general influence of *ridicule* on private and civil life, as well as on learning and the sciences, it has been almost constantly neglected or misrepresented, by divines especially. The manner of treating these subjects in the science of human nature, should be precisely the same as in natural philosophy ; from particular facts to investigate the stated order in which they appear, and then apply the general law, thus discovered, to the explication of other appearances and the improvement of useful arts.

Behold

B. III. OF IMAGINATION. 107

Behold the foremost band; of slender thought,
And easy faith; whom flatt'ring fancy sooths 85
With lying spectres, in themselves to view
Illustrious forms of excellence and good,
That scorn the mansion. With exulting hearts
They spread their spurious treasures to the sun,
And bid the world admire! but chief the glance 90
Of wishful envy draws their joy-bright eyes,
And lifts with self-applause each lordly brow.
In number boundless as the blooms of spring,
Behold their glaring idols, empty shades
By fancy gilded o'er, and then set up 95
For adoration. Some in learning's garb,
With formal-band, and fable-cinctur'd gown,
And rags of mouldy volumes. Some elate

Behold the foremost band, &c.] The first and most general source of ridicule in the characters of men, is vanity, or self-applause for some desirable quality or possession which evidently does not belong to those who assume it.

With martial splendor, steely pikes and swords
 Of costly frame, and gay Phœnician robes 100
 Inwrought with flow'ry gold, assume the port
 Of stately valour : list'ning by his side
 There stands a female form ; to her, with looks
 Of earnest import, pregnant with amaze,
 He talks of deadly deeds, of breaches, storms, 105
 And sulph'rous mines, and ambush : then at once
 Breaks off, and smiles to see her look so pale,
 And asks some wond'ring question of her fears.
 Others of graver mien ; behold, adorn'd
 With holy ensigns, how sublime they move, 110
 And bending oft their sanctimonious eyes,
 Take homage of the simple-minded throng ;
 Ambassadors of heav'n ! Nor much unlike
 Is he whose visage, in the lazy mist
 That mantles every feature, hides a brood 115
 Of politic conceits ; of whispers, nods,
 And

B. III. OF IMAGINATION. 109

And hints deep omen'd with unwieldy schemes,
And dark portents of state. Ten thousand more,
Prodigious habits and tumultuous tongues,
Pour dauntless in and swell the boastful band. 120

Then comes the second order; all who seek
The debt of praise, where watchful unbelief
Darts thro' the thin pretence her squinting eye
On some retir'd appearance which belies
The boasted virtue, or annuls th' applause 125
That justice else would pay. Here side by side
I see two leaders of the solemn train
Approaching: one a female old and grey,
With eyes demure, and wrinkle-furrow'd brow,
Pale as the cheeks of death; yet still she stuns 130

Then comes the second order, &c.] Ridicule from the same
vanity, where tho' the possession be real, yet no merit can
arise from it, because of some particular circumstances,
which though obvious to the spectator, are yet overlook'd
by the ridiculous character.

The

The sick'ning audience with a nauseous tale ;
 How many youths her myrtle chains have worn,
 How many virgins at her triumphs pin'd !
 Yet how resolv'd she guards her cautious heart ;
 Such is her terror at the risques of love, 135
 And man's seducing tongue ! The other seems
 A bearded sage, ungentle in his mien,
 And fordid all his habit : peevish Want
 Grins at his heels, while down the gazing throng
 He stalks, refounding in magnific phrase 140
 The vanity of riches, the contempt
 Of pomp and pow'r. Be prudent in your zeal,
 Ye grave associates ! let the silent grace
 Of her who blushes at the fond regard
 Her charms inspire, more eloquent unfold 145
 The praise of spotless honour : let the man
 Whose eye regards not his illustrious pomp
 And ample store, but as indulgent streams

B. III. OF IMAGINATION. 111

To cheer the barren soil and spread the fruits
Of joy, let him by juster measures fix
The price of riches and the end of pow'r.

Another tribe succeeds; deluded long
By Fancy's dazzling optics, these behold
The images of some peculiar things
With brighter hues resplendent, and portray'd
With features nobler far than e'er adorn'd
Their genuine objects. Hence the fever'd heart
Pants with delirious hope for tinsel charms;
Hence oft obtrusive on the eye of scorn,
Untimely zeal her witless pride betrays!
And serious manhood from the tow'ring aim
Of wisdom, stoops to emulate the boast
Of childish toil. Behold yon mystic form,

Another tribe succeeds, &c.] Ridicule from a notion of excellence in particular objects disproportion'd to their intrinsic value, and inconsistent with the order of nature.

Bedeck'd

Bedeck'd with feathers, insects, weeds and shells !
 Not with intenser view the Samian sage 165
 Bent his fixt eye on heav'n's intenser fires,
 When first the order of that radiant scene
 Swell'd his exulting thought, than this surveys
 A muckworm's entrails or a spider's fang.
 Next him a youth, with flow'rs and myrtles crown'd,
 Attends that virgin form, and blushing knees, 171
 With fondest gesture and a suppliant's tongue,
 To win her coy regard: adieu, for him,
 The dull engagements of the bustling world !
 Adieu the sick impertinence of praise ! 175
 And hope, and action ! for with her alone,
 By streams and shades, to steal the fighting hours,
 Is all he asks, and all that fate can give !
 Thee too, facetious Momion, wand'ring here,
 Thee, dreaded censor, oft have I beheld 180
 Bewilder'd unawares : alas ! too long

Flash'd

B. III. OF IMAGINATION. 113

Flush'd with thy comic triumphs and the spoils
Of sly Derision! till on every side
Hurling thy random bolts, offended Truth
Assign'd thee here thy station with the slaves 185
Of Folly. Thy once formidable name
Shall grace her humble records, and be heard
In scoffs and mock'ry bandied from the lips
Of all the vengeful brotherhood around,
So oft the patient victims of thy scorn. 190

But now, ye gay! to whom indulgent fate,
Of all the Muse's empire hath assign'd
The fields of folly, hither each advance
Your fickle; here the teeming soil affords
Its richest growth. A fav'rite brood appears; 195

But now, ye gay, &c.] Ridicule from a notion of excellence, when the object is absolutely odious or contemptible. This is the highest degree of the ridiculous; as in the affectation of diseases or vices.

In whom the dæmon, with a mother's joy,
 Views all her charms reflected, all her cares
 At full repay'd. Ye most illustrious band!
 Who, scorning reason's plain, pedantic rules,
 And order's vulgar bondage, never meant 200
 For souls sublime as yours, with generous zeal
 Pay vice the rev'rence virtue long usurp'd,
 And yield deformity the fond applause
 Which beauty wont to claim; forgive my song,
 That for the blushing diffidence of youth, 205
 It shuns th' unequal province of your praise.

Thus far triumphant in the pleasing guile
 Of bland imagination, folly's train
 Have dar'd our search: but now a dastard-kind
 Advance reluctant, and with fault'ring feet 210

Thus far triumphant, &c.] Ridicule from false shame or
 groundless fear.

Shrink

B. III. OF IMAGINATION. 115

Shrink from the gazer's eye : infeebled hearts
Whom fancy chills with visionary fears,
Or bends to servile tameness with conceits
Of shame, of evil, or of base defect,
Fantastic and delusive. Here the slave 215
Who droops abash'd when sullen pomp surveys
His humbler habit ; here the trembling wretch
Unnerv'd and struck with terror's icy bolts,
Spent in weak wailings, drown'd in shameful tears,
At every dream of danger : here subdued 220
By frontless laughter and the hardy scorn
Of old, unfeeling vice, the abject soul,
Who blushing half resigns the candid praise
Of temperance and honour ; half disowns
A freeman's hatred of tyrannic pride ; 225
And hears with fickle smiles the venal mouth
With foulest licence mock the patriot's name.

Last of the motley bands on whom the pow'r
 Of gay derision bends her hostile aim,
 Is that where shameful ignorance presides, 230
 Beneath her fordid banners, lo! they march,
 Like blind and lame. Whate'er their doubtful hands
 Attempt, confusion straight appears behind,
 And troubles all the work. Thro' many a maze,
 Perplex'd they struggle, changing every path, 235
 O'erturning every purpose; then at last
 Sit down dismay'd, and leave th' entangled scene
 For scorn to sport with. Such then is th' abode
 Of Folly in the mind; and such the shapes
 In which she governs her obsequious train. 240

Thro' ev'ry scene of ridicule in things
 To lead the tenour of my devious lay;

Last of the, &c.] Ridicule from the ignorance of such
 things as our circumstances require us to know.

Thro'

B. III. OF IMAGINATION. 117

Thro' ev'ry swift occasion which the hand
 Of laughter points at, when the mirthful sting
 Distends her fallying nerves and choaks her tongue ;
 What were it but to count each crystal drop 246
 Which morning's dewy fingers on the blooms
 Of May distil ? Suffice it to have said,
 Where'er the power of Ridicule displays
 Her quaint-ey'd visage, some incongruous form, 250
 Some

— *Suffice it to have said, &c.*] By comparing these general sources of ridicule with each other, and examining the ridiculous in other objects, we may obtain a general definition of it equally applicable to every species. The most important circumstance of this definition is laid down in the lines referred to ; but others more minute we shall subjoin here. *Aristotle's* account of the matter seems both imperfect and false ; τὸ γὰρ γελοῖον, says he, ἐστὶν ἀμάρτυμα τι καὶ αἰσχρ., ἀναιδυνον καὶ ὁ βλαβερὸν: *the ridiculous is some certain fault or turpitude without pain, and not destructive to its subject.* (*Poet. c. 5.*) For allowing it to be true, as it is not, that the ridiculous is never accompany'd with pain, yet we might produce many instances of such a fault or turpitude which cannot with any tolerable propriety be called ridiculous. So that the definition does not distinguish the

Some stubborn dissonance of things combin'd,
 Strikes on the quick observer : whether pomp,
 Or praise, or beauty mix their partial claim

Where

thing defined. Nay farther, even when we perceive the turpitude tending to the destruction of its subject, we may still be sensible of a ridiculous appearance, till the ruin become imminent and the keener sensations of pity or terror banish the ludicrous apprehension from our minds. For the sensation of ridicule is not a bare perception of the agreement or disagreement of ideas ; but a passion or emotion of the mind consequential to that perception. So that the mind may perceive the agreement or disagreement, and yet not feel the ridiculous, because it is engrossed by a more violent emotion. Thus it happens that some men think those objects ridiculous, to which others cannot endure to apply the name ; because in them they excite a much intenser and more important feeling. And this difference, among other causes, has brought a good deal of confusion into this question.

That which makes objects ridiculous, is some ground of admiration or esteem connected with other more general circumstances comparatively worthless or deformed ; or it is some circumstance of turpitude or deformity connected with what is in general excellent or beautiful : the inconsistent properties existing either in the objects themselves, or in the apprehension of the person to whom they relate ; belonging always to the same

Where sordid fashions, where ignoble deeds,

Where foul deformity are wont to dwell,

Or whether these with violation loath'd,

Invade

same order or class of being; implying sentiment or design; and exciting no acute or vehement emotion of the heart.

To prove the several parts of this definition: *The appearance of excellence or beauty connected with a general condition comparatively sordid or deformed, is ridiculous: for instance, pompous pretensions of wisdom join'd with ignorance or folly in the Socrates of Aristophanes; and the ostentations of military glory with cowardice and stupidity in the Thraso of Terence.*

The appearance of deformity or turpitude in conjunction with what is in general excellent or venerable, is also ridiculous: for instance, the personal weaknesses of a magistrate appearing in the solemn and public functions of his station.

The incongruous properties may either exist in the objects themselves, or in apprehension of the person to whom they relate: in the last-mentioned instance, they both exist in the objects; in the instances from Aristophanes and Terence, one of them is objective and real, the other only founded in the apprehension of the ridiculous character.

The inconsistent properties must belong to the same order or class of being. A coxcomb in fine cloaths bedaubed by accident in foul weather, is a ridiculous object; because his

Invade resplendent pomp's imperious mien,
The charms of beauty, or the boast of praise.

Ask we for what fair end, th' Almighty Sire

In mortal bosoms wakes this gay contempt, 260

These

general apprehension of excellence and esteem is referr'd to the splendour and expence of his dress. A man of sense and merit, in the same circumstances, is not counted ridiculous; because the general ground of excellence and esteem in him, is, both in fact and in his own apprehension, of a very different species.

Every ridiculous object implies sentiment or design. A column placed by an architect without a capital or base, is laughed at: the same column in a ruin causes a very different sensation.

And lastly, *the occurrence must excite no acute or vehement emotion of the heart*, such as terror, pity, or indignation; for in that case, as was observed above, the mind is not at leisure to contemplate the ridiculous.

Whether any appearance not ridiculous be involved in this description, and whether it comprehend every species and form of the ridiculous, must be determined by repeated applications of it to particular instances.

Ask we for what fair end, &c.] Since it is beyond all contradiction evident that we have a *natural* sense or feel-

ing

B. III. OF IMAGINATION. 121

These grateful stings of laughter, from disgust

Educing pleasure? Wherefore, but to aid

The tardy steps of reason, and at once

By this prompt impulse urge us to depress

The

ing of the ridiculous, and since so good a reason may be assign'd to justify the supreme being for bestowing it; one cannot without astonishment reflect on the conduct of those men who imagine it is for the service of true religion to vilify and blacken it without distinction, and endeavour to persuade us that it is never applied but in a bad cause. Ridicule is not concerned with mere speculative truth or falsehood. It is not in abstract propositions or theorems, but in actions and passions, good and evil, beauty and deformity, that we find materials for it; and all these terms are *relative*, implying approbation or blame. To ask them whether *ridicule be a test of truth*, is, in other words, to ask whether that which is ridiculous can be *morally true*, can be just and becoming; or whether that which is just and becoming, can be ridiculous: a question that does not deserve a serious answer. For it is most evident, that, as in a metaphysical proposition offered to the understanding for its assent, the faculty of reason examines the terms of the proposition, and finding one idea, which was supposed equal to another, to be in fact unequal, of consequence rejects the proposition as a falsehood; so in objects offer'd

The giddy aims of folly ? Tho' the light
 Of truth slow-dawning on th' inquiring mind,
 At length unfolds, thro' many a subtile tie,
 How these uncouth disorders end at last

In

offer'd to the mind for its esteem or applause, the faculty of ridicule, finding an incongruity in the claim, urges the mind to reject it with laughter and contempt. When therefore we observe such a claim obtruded upon mankind, and the inconsistent circumstances carefully concealed from the eye of the public, it is our business, if the matter be of importance to society, to drag out those latent circumstances, and by setting them in full view, to convince the world how ridiculous the claim is; and thus a double advantage is gain'd; for we both detect the *moral falsehood* sooner than in the way of speculative inquiry, and impress the minds of men with a stronger sense of the vanity and error of its authors. And this and no more is meant by the application of ridicule.

But it is said, the practice is dangerous, and may be inconsistent with the regard we owe to objects of real dignity and excellence. I answer, the practice fairly managed can never be dangerous; men may be dishonest in obtruding circumstances foreign to the subject, and we may be inadvertent in allowing those circumstances to impose upon us;

or

but

B. III. OF IMAGINATION. 123

In public evil ! yet benignant heav'n,
Conscious how dim the dawn of truth appears 270
To thousands ; conscious what a scanty pause
From labours and from care, the wilder lot
Of humble life affords for studious thought

but the sense of ridicule always judges right. The *Socrates* of *Aristophanes* is as truly ridiculous a character as ever was drawn. — True ; but it is not the character of *Socrates*, the divine moralist and father of ancient wisdom. What then ? did the ridicule of the poet hinder the philosopher from detecting and disclaiming those foreign circumstances which he had falsely introduced into his character, and thus rendering the satirist doubly ridiculous in his turn ? No ; but it nevertheless had an ill influence on the minds of the people. And so has the reasoning of *Spinoza* made many atheists ; he has founded it indeed on suppositions utterly false ; but allow him these, and his conclusions are unavoidably true. And if we must reject the use of ridicule, because, by the imposition of false circumstances, things may be made to seem ridiculous, which are not so in themselves ; why we ought not in the same manner to reject the use of reason, because, by proceeding on false principles, conclusions will appear true which are impossible in nature, let the vehement and obstinate declaimers against ridicule determine.

To

To scan the maze of nature ; therefore stamp'd
 The glaring scenes with characters of scorn 275
 As broad, as obvious, to the passing clown,
 As to the letter'd sage's curious eye.

Such are the various aspects of the mind —
 Some heav'nly genius, whose unclouded thoughts
 Attain that secret harmony which blends 280
 Th' æthereal spirit with its mold of clay ;
 O ! teach me to reveal the grateful charm
 That searchless nature o'er the sense of man
 Diffuses, to behold, in lifeless things,
 The inexpressive semblance of himself, 285
 Of thought and passion. Mark the sable woods
 That shade sublime yon mountain's nodding brow ;
 With what religious awe the solemn scene

The inexpressive semblance, &c.] This similitude is the foundation of almost all the ornaments of poetic diction.

Commands

B. III. OF IMAGINATION. 125

Commands your steps ! as if the reverend form
Of Minos or of Numa should forsake 290
Th' Elyfian feats, and down th' imbrow'ring glade
Move to your pausing eye ! Behold th' expanse
Of yon gay landscape, where the silver clouds
Flit o'er the heav'ns before the sprightly breeze :
Now their grey cincture skirts the doubtful sun ; 295
Now streams of splendor, thro' their opening veil
Effulgent, sweep from off the gilded lawn
Th' aërial shadows ; on the curling brook,
And on the shady margin's quiv'ring leaves
With quickest lustre glancing ; while you view 300
The prospect, say, within your chearful breast
Plays not the lively sense of winning mirth
With clouds and sun-shine chequer'd, while the round
Of social converse, to th' inspiring tongue
Of some gay nymph amid her subject train, 305
Moves all obsequious ? Whence is this effect,

This kindred pow'r of such discordant things ?
 Or flows their semblance from that mystic tone
 To which the new-born mind's harmonious pow'rs
 At first were strung ? Or rather from the links 310
 Which artful custom twines around her frame ?

For when the diff'rent images of things
 By chance combin'd, have struck th' attentive soul
 With deeper impulse, or connected long,
 Have drawn her frequent eye ; howe'er distinct 315
 Th' external scenes, yet oft th' ideas gain
 From that conjunction an eternal tie,
 And sympathy unbroken. Let the mind
 Recal one partner of the various league,
 Immediate, lo ! the firm confed'rates rise, 320
 And each his former strait resumes :
 One movement governs the consenting throng,
 And all at once with rosy pleasure shine,

Or all are sadden'd with the glooms of care.

'Twas thus, if ancient fame the truth unfold, 325

Two faithful needles, from th' informing touch

Of the same parent-stone, together drew

Its mystic virtue, and at first conspir'd

With fatal impulse quiv'ring to the pole :

Then, tho' disjoin'd by kingdoms, tho' the main 330

Rowl'd its broad surge betwixt, and diff'rent stars

Beheld their wakeful motions, yet preserv'd

The former friendship, and remember'd still

Th' alliance of their birth : whate'er the line

Which one possess'd, nor pause, nor quiet knew 335

The sure associate, ere with trembling speed

He found its path and fix'd unerring there.

Such is the secret union, when we feel

A song, a flow'r, a name, at once restore

Two faithful needles, &c.] See the elegant poem recited
by Cardinal Bembo in the character of *Lucretius* ; *Strada*
Prolus. vi. Academ. 2. c. 5.

Those

Those long-connected scenes when first they mov'd
 Th' attention ; backward thro' her mazy walks 341
 Guiding her wanton fancy to her scope,
 To temples, courts or fields ; with all the bands
 Of painted forms, of passions and designs
 Attendant : whence, if pleasing in itself, 345
 The prospect from that sweet accession gains
 Redoubled influence o'er the list'ning mind.

By these mysterious ties the busy pow'r
 Of mem'ry her ideal train preserves
 Intire ; or when they would elude her watch, 350
 Reclaims their fleeting footsteps from the waste
 Of dark oblivion ; thus collecting all
 The various forms of being to present,
 Before the curious aim of mimic art, 354

By these mysterious ties, &c.] The act of remembering
 seems almost wholly to depend on the association of ideas.

Their

B. III. OF IMAGINATION. 129

Their largest choice : like spring's unfolded blooms
Exhaling sweetness, that the skilful bee
May taste at will, from their selected spoils
To work her dulcet food. For not th' expanse
Of living lakes in summer's noontide calm, 359
Reflects the bord'ring shade and sun-bright heav'ns
With fairer semblance ; not the sculptur'd gold
More faithful keeps the graver's lively trace,
Than he whose birth the sister-pow'rs of art
Propitious view'd, and from his genial star
Shed influence to the seeds of fancy kind ; 365
Than his attemper'd bosom must preserve
The seal of nature. There alone unchang'd,
Her form remains. The balmy walks of May
There breathe perennial sweets : the trembling chord
Resounds for ever in th' abstracted ear, 370
Melodious ; and the virgin's radiant eye,
Superior to disease, to grief, and time,
Shines with unbating lustre. Thus at length

Indow'd with all that nature can bestow,
 The child of fancy oft in silence bends 375
 O'er these mixt treasures of his pregnant breast,
 With conscious pride. From them he oft resolves
 To frame he knows not what excelling things ;
 And win he knows not what sublime reward
 Of praise and wonder. By degrees, the mind 380
 Feels her young nerves dilate : the plassic pow'rs
 Labour for action : blind emotions heave
 His bosom ; and with loveliest frenzy caught,
 From earth to heav'n he rolls his daring eye,
 From heav'n to earth. Anon ten thousand shapes, 385
 Like spectres trooping to the wifard's call,
 Flit swift before him. From the womb of earth,
 From ocean's bed they come : th' eternal heav'ns
 Disclose their splendors, and the dark abyfs
 Pours out her births unknown. With fixed gaze 390
 He marks the rising phantoms. Now compares
 Their diff'rent forms ; now blends them, now divides,
 Inlarges

B. III. OF IMAGINATION. 131

Inlarges and extenuates by turns ;

Opposes, ranges in fantastic bands,

And infinitely varies. Hither now, 395

Now thither fluctuates his inconstant aim,

With endless choice perplex'd. At length his plan

Begins to open. Lucid order dawns ;

And as from Chaos old the jarring seeds

Of nature at the voice divine repair'd 400

Each to its place, till rosy earth unvell'd

Her fragrant bosom, and the joyful sun

Sprung up the blue serene ; by swift degrees

Thus disentangled, his entire design

Emerges. Colours mingle, features join, 405

And lines converge : the fainter parts retire ;

The fairer eminent in light advance ;

And every image on its neighbour smiles.

A while he stands, and with a father's joy

Contemplates. Then with Promethéan art, 410

K 2 Into

Into its proper vehicle he breathes
 The fair conception ; which, imbody'd thus,
 And permanent, becomes to eyes or ears
 An object ascertain'd : while thus inform'd,
 The various organs of his mimic skill, 415
 The consonance of sounds, the featur'd rock,
 The shadowy picture and impassion'd verse,
 Beyond their proper pow'rs attract the soul
 By that expressive semblance, while in sight
 Of nature's great original we scan 420
 The lively child of art ; while line by line,
 And feature after feature we refer
 To that sublime exemplar whence it stole
 Those animating charms. Thus beauty's palm
 Betwixt 'em wav'ring hangs : applauding love 425
 Doubts where to chuse ; and mortal man aspires

*Into its proper vehicle, &c.] This relates to the different
 sorts of corporeal mediums, by which the ideas of the
 artists are render'd palpable to the senses ; as by sounds, in
 music ; by lines and shadows, in painting ; by diction, in
 poetry, &c.*

B. III. OF IMAGINATION. 133

To tempt creative praise. As when a cloud
 Of gath'ring hail with limpid crusts of ice
 Inclos'd and obvious to the beaming sun,
 Collects his large effulgence; strait the heav'ns 430
 With equal flames present on either hand
 The radiant visage: Persia stands at gaze,
 Appall'd; and on the brink of Ganges doubts
 The snowy-vested seer, in Mithra's name,
 To which the fragrance of the south shall burn, 435
 To which his warbled orisons ascend.

Such various bliss the well-tun'd heart enjoys,
 Favour'd of heav'n! while plung'd in sordid cares,
 Th' unfeeling vulgar mocks the boon divine:
 And harsh austerity, from whose rebuke 440
 Young Love and smiling Wonder shrink away,
 Abash'd and chill of heart, with fager frowns
 Condemns the fair enchantment. On my strain,
 Perhaps ev'n now, some cold, fastidious judge
 Casts a disdainful eye; and calls my toil, 445

And calls the love and beauty which I sing,
The dream of folly. Thou, grave censor! say,
Is beauty then a dream, because the glooms
Of dulness hang too heavy on thy sense,
To let her shine upon thee? So the man
Whose eye ne'er open'd on the light of heav'n,
Might smile with scorn while raptur'd vision tells
Of the gay-colour'd radiance flushing bright
O'er all creation. From the wise be far
Such gross unhallow'd pride; nor needs my song
Descend so low; but rather now unfold,
If human thought could reach, or words unfold,
By what mysterious fabric of the mind,
The deep-felt joys and harmony of sound
Result from airy motion; and from shape
The lovely phantoms of sublime and fair.
By what fine ties hath God connected things
When present in the mind; which in themselves
Have no connection? Sure the rising sun,

O'er

B. III. OF IMAGINATION. 135

O'er the cærulean convex of the sea, 465

With equal brightness and with equal warmth

Might rowl his fiery orb; nor yet the soul

Thus feel her frame expanded, and her pow'rs

Exulting in the splendor she beholds;

Like a young conqu'ror moving thro' the pomp. 470

Of some triumphal day. When join'd at eve,

Soft murm'ring streams and gales of gentlest breath

Melodious Philomela's wakeful strain

Attemper, could not man's discerning ear

Thro' all its tones the symphony pursue; 475

Nor yet this breath divine of nameless joy

Steal thro' his veins and fan th' awaken'd heart,

Mild as the breeze, yet rapt'rous as the song?

But were not nature still endow'd at large

With all which life requires, tho' unadorn'd 480

With such enchantment? Wherefore then her form

So exquisitely fair? her breath perfum'd

With such æthereal sweetness? whence her voice

Inform'd at will to raise or to depress

Th' impassion'd soul ? and whence the robes of light

Which thus invest her with more lovely pomp 486

Than fancy can describe ? Whence but from thee,

O source divine of ever-flowing love,

And thy unmeasur'd goodness ? Not content

With every food of life to nourish man, 490

By kind illusions of the wond'ring sense

Thou mak'st all nature beauty to his eye,

Or music to his ear : well-pleas'd he scans

The goodly prospect ; and with inward smiles

Treads the gay verdure of the painted plain ; 495

Beholds the azure canopy of heav'n,

And living lamps that over-arch his head

With more than regal splendor ; bends his ears

To the full choir of water, air, and earth ;

Nor heeds the pleasing error of his thought, 500

Nor doubts the painted green or azure arch,

Nor questions more the music's mingling sounds

Than

B. III. OF IMAGINATION. 137

Than space, or motion, or eternal time ;
 So sweet he feels their influence to attract
 The fixed soul ; to brighten the dull glooms 505
 Of care, and make the destin'd road of life
 Delightful to his feet. So fables tell,
 The advent'rous heroe, bound on hard exploits,
 Beholds with glad surprize, by secret spells
 Of some kind sage, the patron of his toils, 510
 A visionary paradise disclos'd
 Amid the dubious wild : with streams and shades,
 And airy songs, th' enchanted landscape smiles,
 Cheers his long labours and renews his frame.

What then is taste, but these internal pow'rs 515
 Active, and strong, and feelingly alive
 To each fine impulse ? a discerning sense
 Of decent and sublime, with quick disgust
 From things deform'd, or disarrang'd, or gross
 In species ? This, nor gems, nor stores of gold, 520
 Nor purple state, nor culture can bestow ;

But

But God alone, when first his active hand
 Imprints the sacred byas of the soul.
 He, mighty parent! wife and just in all,
 Free as the vital breeze or light of heav'n, 525
 Reveals the charms of nature. Ask the swain
 Who journeys homeward from a summer day's
 Long labour, why, forgetful of his toils
 And due repose, he loiters to behold
 The sunshine gleaming as thro' amber clouds; 530
 O'er all the western sky; full soon, I ween,
 His rude expression and untutor'd airs,
 Beyond the pow'r of language, will unfold
 The form of beauty smiling at his heart,
 How lovely! how commanding! But tho' heav'n 535
 In every breast hath sown these early seeds
 Of love and admiration, yet in vain,
 Without fair culture's kind parental aid,
 Without enlivening suns, and genial show'rs,
 And shelter from the blast, in vain we hope 540

B. III. OF IMAGINATION. 139

The tender plant should rear its blooming head,
 Or yield the harvest promis'd in its spring.
 Nor yet will every soil with equal stores
 Repay the tiller's labour ; or attend
 His will, obsequious, whether to produce 545
 The olive or the laurel. Diff'rent minds
 Incline to diff'rent objects : one pursues
 The vast alone, the wonderful, the wild ;
 Another sighs for harmony, and grace,
 And gentlest beauty. Hence when lightning fires 550
 The arch of heav'n, and thunders rock the ground ;
 When furious whirlwinds rend the howling air,
 And ocean, groaning from his lowest bed,
 Heaves his tempestuous billows to the sky ;
 Amid the mighty uproar, while below 555
 The nations tremble, Shakespear looks abroad
 From some high cliff, superior, and enjoys

— *One pursues*

The vast alone, &c.] See the note to ver. 18 of this Book.

The

The elemental war. But Waller longs,
 All on the margin of some flow'ry stream
 To spread his careless limbs amid the cool 560
 Of plantane shades, and to the list'ning deer
 The tale of flighted vows and love's disdain
 Refounds soft-warbling all the live-long day :
 Consenting Zephyr sighs ; the weeping rill
 Joins in his plaint, melodious ; mute the groves ; 565
 And hill and dale with all their echoes mourn.
 Such and so various are the tastes of men.

Oh ! blest of heav'n, whom not the languid songs
 Of luxury, the Siren ! not the bribes
 Of fordid wealth, nor all the gaudy spoils 570
 Of pageant honour can seduce to leave

Waller longs, &c.]

*O ! how I long my careless limbs to lay
 Under the plantane shade ; and all the day
 With am'rous airs my fancy entertain, &c.*

WALLER, Battle of the Summer-Island, Canto I.

And again,

*While in the park I sing, the list'ning deer
 Attend my passion, and forget to fear, &c.*

At Pens-hurst.

Those

B. III. OF IMAGINATION. 141

Those ever-blooming sweets, which from the store

Of nature fair imagination culls

To charm th' enliven'd soul ! What tho' not all

Of mortal offspring can attain the height 575

Of envied life ; tho' only few possess

Patrician treasures and an ampler state ;

Yet nature's care, to all her children just,

With richer treasures or imperial state

Indows at large whatever happy man 580

Will deign to use them. His the city's pomp,

The rural honours his. Whate'er adorns

The princely dome, the column and the arch,

The breathing marbles and the sculptur'd gold,

Beyond the proud possessor's narrow claim, 585

His tuneful breast enjoys. For him, the spring

Distills her dews, and from the filken gem

Its lucid leaves unfolds : for him, the hand

Of autumn tinges every fertile branch.

With blooming gold and blushes like the morn. 590

Each

Each passing hour sheds tribute from her wings;
 And still new beauties meet his lonely walk,
 And loves unfelt attract him. Not a breeze
 Flies o'er the meadow, not a cloud imbibes
 The setting sun's effulgence; not a strain 595
 From all the tenants of the warbling shade
 Ascends, but whence his bosom can partake
 Fresh pleasure, unprov'd. Nor thence partakes

— *Not a breeze, &c.*] That this account may not appear rather poetically extravagant than just in philosophy, it may be proper to produce the sentiment of one of the greatest, wisest, and best of men on this head; one so little to be suspected of partiality in the case, that he reckons it among those favours for which he was especially thankful to the gods, that they had not suffered him to make any great proficiency in the arts of eloquence and poetry, lest by that means he should have been diverted from pursuits of more importance to his high station. Speaking of the beauty of universal nature, he observes, that there is a pleasing and graceful aspect in every object we perceive, when once we consider its connection with that general order. He instances in many things which at first sight would be thought rather deformities, and then adds, that a man who enjoys a sensibility of temper with a just comprehension of the universal order — will discern many amiable things, not credible to every mind, but to those alone who have entered into an honourable familiarity with nature and her works. M. Antonin. iii. 2.

B. III. OF IMAGINATION. 143

Fresh pleasure only : for the attentive mind,

By this harmonious action on her pow'rs,

Becomes herself harmonious : wont so oft

In outward things to meditate the charm

Of sacred order, soon she seeks at home

To find a kindred Order, to exert

Within herself this elegance of love,

This fair-inspir'd delight : her temper'd pow'rs

Refine at length, and every passion wears

A chafter, milder, more attractive mien,

But if to ampler prospects, if to gaze

On nature's form, where, negligent of all

These lesser graces, she assumes the port

Of that eternal majesty that weigh'd

The world's foundations, if to these the mind

Exalts her daring eye ; then mightier far

Will be the change, and nobler. Would the forms

Of servile custom cramp her gen'rous pow'rs ?

Would sordid policies, the barb'rous growth

Of

Of ignorance and rapine, bow her down
 To tame pursuits, to indolence and fear?
 Lo! she appeals to nature, to the winds 620
 And rowling waves, the sun's unwearied course,
 The elements and seasons : all declare
 For what the Eternal maker has ordain'd
 The pow'rs of man : we feel within ourselves
 His energy divine : he tells the heart, 625
 He meant, he made us to behold and love
 What He beholds and loves, the general orb
 Of life and being ; to be great like him,
 Beneficent and active. Thus the men
 Whom nature's works can charm, with God himself
 Hold converse ; grow familiar, day by day, 630
 With his conceptions, act upon his plan ;
 And form to his, the relish of their souls.

T H E E N D.



